

***An Analysis of the Role of Teacher in Distance Learning: A Comparative Study of the Instructor in SLN and the Tutor of Beiwai Online***

**Gui Ying**

*Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, China*

With the rapid development of modern information technology, distance learning has become a very popular education mode. Special features of distance education lead to the new roles of the teacher in this new environment and request a brand new teacher-student relationship. Based on her experience, the author uses the “*instructor*” in SUNY Learning Network of the US and the “*tutor*” in Beiwai Online College in China as cases to analyze how a teacher should function in the distance-learning environment. Hopefully through the comparison and contrast of these two cases more pedagogical principles in distance education will be revealed for the benefit of distance educators.

The 21st century witnesses the rapid development of modern information technology, which leads to the emergence of various new educational modes. Among them, distance learning is the most prominent. This mode of education eliminates the constraints of time and location which traditional education modes have and provides opportunities to people precluded from going to campus due to geographic barriers or busy personal and professional schedules. While distance education provides students with greater convenience, it also brings more challenges to teachers.

Distance learning takes place in a special new learning environment—cyberspace, which is totally different from the traditional classroom. The

teachers and students there are separated from each other physically and communicate mainly through information technology, so its teaching practice and learning process have to rely on interaction through technology instead of face-to-face communication. What challenges will teachers face in this new environment? What kind of preparation should a distance educator make? These issues deserve the attention of scholars in distance education.

## **DISTANCE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

To better understand the new learning environment, two critical concepts should be introduced: “immediacy” and “social presence.” Immediacy refers to perceived “psychological distance between communicators” (Weiner & Mehrabian, 1968). In ordinary classroom teaching, teachers can use verbal immediacy behaviors (praise, asking viewpoints, use of humor, self disclosure, etc.) and non-verbal immediacy behavior (physical proximity, touch, eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, etc.) to reduce the psychological distance between themselves and students. But in distance learning context, due to the separation of students and teachers by time and space, the communication between the teacher and the student has to rely on media. Different media have differing capabilities to transmit the non-verbal and vocal cues that produce feelings of immediacy in face-to-face communication. Therefore, it is very important for teachers to know different media so that they can choose the most appropriate one for their own use in the new teaching environment.

The concept of social presence was first introduced by Short, Williams and Christie (1976) and they defined it as “the quality of a medium to project the salience of others in interpersonal communication” (Short, 1976). In other words, it refers to the ability of learners to project themselves socially and emotionally as real people in an online learning context. The degree of social presence of a given medium is determined by the extent to which it conveys the non-verbal cues in a larger social context, including e.g., motivation,

attitudes, social interaction and social equality. In the distance-learning environment, if the students cannot feel their social presence online, they cannot get involved in online learning. Furthermore, as different media have different transmitting capabilities, the users of any given communication medium should be aware of the degree of social presence of that particular medium and avoid using it for certain types of interactions; specifically, interactions requiring a higher degree of social presence than they perceive. As social presence is very important in understanding person-to-person telecommunications, the teacher should utilize suitable technology methods to enhance social presence of the students in cyber space. However, technology alone is not enough to create a strong social cohesion and sense of community among online members. Therefore it is essential for teachers to try various different kinds of means to help students to develop social presence.

Garrison (1997) also considers social presence an important concept in understanding social context and creating a social climate in the online environment. He defines it as the ability of learners to project themselves socially and emotionally in a community of inquiry, and associates it with the degree an individual projects himself through the medium either verbally or nonverbally. The more social presence one feels in distance learning environment, the more effective he will be in his online learning, so assumingly social presence is significantly correlated with student perceptions of satisfaction with online courses.

This assumption has been proved by Richardson and Swan's research (Richardson & Swan, 2001). Based on a survey done at SUNY at Albany in 1999, Richardson and Karen Swan found that the students participating in the online course discussion strove to develop a greater sense of social presence by employing text based-verbal immediacy behavior to reduce the psychological distance between them. The shared discourse among the students and between the students and instructors is positively related to student satisfaction with the courses. In one word: in this new environment, it is very important for teachers to help students to increase their social

presence and to adjust to the new mode of learning.

## **TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP IN DISTANCE LEARNING**

In distance education, the teacher-student relationship is different from that in traditional classroom. As a new mode of education, distance learning finds its echo in the student-centered theory. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a famous philosopher John Dewey advocates this educational approach with other exponents of progressive education, which view students as actively shaping their own understanding and teachers as facilitating that process.

Dewey criticizes the traditional classroom teaching which only emphasizes teacher's authority and the spoon-feeding of knowledge. Fully respecting the initiative of the student, he shifts the focus from teacher to student and advocates student's active involvement in the entire study process. Therefore, in his theory, the acquisition of the knowledge depends on student interaction with the environment through experimentation and reflection. In addition, Dewey believes that people can remember the knowledge better by learning how to do.

Dewey's education theory can be used to explain teacher-student relationship in distance education and his concern with interaction and environment for learning provides a continuing framework for teaching practice in distance education. Thus, his learner-centered theory has become one of the foundations for modern distance education.

The student-centered theory also has roots in psychology. One of the most famous physiologists in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget, advocates that students construct their knowledge through their interaction with the outside environment. More concerned with the psychological development, Piaget believes students should be the subjects of learning activities and their initiative is the key premise. Furthermore, Piaget believes knowledge can be obtained between the interaction from the cognitive

subject and the environment instead of through the teacher. The learning process is developed in a spiral progression, and the ideal learning situation to construct the learner's knowledge framework is when the subject and object reach a balanced interaction and collaboration. Piaget feels teachers are the cooperators of the students rather than the authorities, and education should be constructed through the interaction between the two. He believed that the teacher should be the organizer, director, helper and facilitator, who stimulate the student's motivation, innovation, and creativity in order to achieve the learning purpose. In one word, Piaget emphasizes the student-centered approach and uses balanced cooperation and interaction to explain the teacher-student relationship (Wang & Li, 2002).

Dewey and Piaget coincide in emphasizing the importance of students in education, and they both respect the initiative of students and expect them to actively participate in learning. The theory of these two masters provides the framework for the new student-teacher relationship in distance learning, which sets the tone for the teacher's new relationship with the student. As teachers, we must realize in this new learning environment the student is the center of learning activities and he acquires knowledge by his own initiative through information tools and the teacher's duty is just to provide help through various kinds of means.

## **TWO CASE STUDIES**

In the online environment (the separation between students and teachers) and with the new student-teacher relationship in distance education, the role of the teacher has become brand new. The following two distance-learning systems—SUNY Learning Network (SLN) and Beiwai Online College—are presented to illustrate the role of the teacher in distance context.

### **The Instructor in SUNY Learning Network**

SLN is a national leader of online education in the U.S. and it has

developed and implemented operational and support services that can serve 64 institutions and nearly 400,000 students of the State University of New York system. As a former student of SLN, I benefited tremendously from the SLN system and learned a great deal from the SLN instructors. My experience with the SLN instructors let me know how they interact with their students through the following channels on the SLN platform:

1. *Course Information*: This section contains general introduction to the course. It has items such as welcome message, registration information, contact information, overview, course objective, textbook and reading, course learning activities, course schedule, plagiarism, etc. Typically an instructor starts the course by posting here.
2. *Learning Modules*: This section has the following three parts:
  - 1) *Discussion*. Each module has a required discussion. All students have to post discussion remarks according to the thread or the topic of this unit, and then the instructor makes comments and grades it immediately.
  - 2) *Written assignment Area*. Here students submit their homework to the instructor.
  - 3) *Talk with the professor*. Here students can ask the teacher questions concerning the content of the course.
  - 4) *Question area*. If a student has questions concerning the content of the course, he can ask the instructor or his classmates here.
3. *Class Community*: This is an area for socialization outside class. The instructor and students not only discuss the content of the lessons but also things outside the classroom teaching. Typically it contains the following sections:
  - 1) *Meet your classmates*. The students introduce themselves to the class here, and meet the others enrolled in the course.
  - 2) *The bulletin board*. The instructor posts his announcements here. Students talk and chat with their instructor and classmates about topics in or outside the class.
  - 3) *Your evaluation*. The instructor posts the grades and comments to students' homework here.
  - 4) *Shared references*. Here the instructor and students contribute internet resources to the class. Each module, the instructor requires the students to post at least one website or other learning resources for the whole class to share.

5) *The online office hours & your private folder.* This section is specially designed for private communication between the instructor and one student. All documents created in this area are *only* viewable by the instructor and that particular student.

From the above description, we can see that the SLN instructor conducts interaction with students through various kinds of channels on the SLN platform. Except for these official interaction channels in the course designed by SLN, each SLN instructor creates special contact means and channels in his/her own way to enhance interaction with students. I remember one SLN instructor who conducted the online course very successfully. When the course began, the instructor offered the students various contact methods, e.g. email, AOL messenger, telephone and fax so the students could interact with her almost all the time. Meanwhile, the instructor required that all students provide her their own contact information so she could reach everyone in class whenever necessary. Hence, the interaction between the instructor and students went on smoothly. When a difficult module came, the instructor would arrange a Teaching Assistant (TA) to supply face-to-face assistance to the students, most students in the class felt this online course was as effective as traditional classroom teaching.

Not only very successful in encouraging the teaching practice of their instructors, SLN also has done a great lot of researches concerning the pedagogical principles of distance learning. In the spring of 1999, Dr. Karen Swan, one of the distinguished SLN instructors in the education school of SUNY at Albany, conducted an online survey with 3,800 students enrolled in 264 courses offered by SLN.

The results of her survey revealed significant differences in student satisfaction and perceived learning among students interaction with their instructors at differing perceived levels: "Students who reported low levels of interaction with their instructor also reported low levels of learning and satisfaction with their courses. Conversely, students who reported high levels of interaction with their instructors also reported high levels of learning and satisfaction with their courses" (Swan, 2002, p. 9). Swan's survey illustrates

that in distance learning student–teacher interaction is closely related to student satisfaction and perceived learning. Therefore, the instructor plays a very important role in helping the student to achieve satisfactory study results. Also, Swan determines that three factors are consistently and significantly associated with the success of online courses: a clear and consistent course structure, an instructor who interacts frequently and constructively with their students, and a valued and dynamic discussion (Swan, 2003). Therefore, to function well in online education, the instructor should master the online instructional design principles and design effective online courses for the students, interact with their students actively and involve them in discussions.

Although Swan’s research is done solely with the student population of SLN, its finding has revealed some common laws for distance education all over the world. These findings are also helpful for distance educators in China to understand their new roles in the new environment.

### **The Tutor in Beiwai Online College**

Distance education has not only grown rapidly in developed countries as the US, but also gained popularity in developing countries as well, such as China. The number of Chinese online colleges has increased rapidly. Beiwai Online College is one of the 67 online institutes authorized by the Chinese State Education Commission and one of the first Chinese online education colleges qualified to award English degrees to students. It has provided new opportunities of higher education in English for people all over China. In Beiwai Online College, all the learning resources and supervision of the learning process and student support are provided through the platform assisted by real tutors and virtual teachers. I have been working for years as a tutor and an academic director for Beiwai Online’s local learning center at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics so here is my first hand experience.

Beiwai Online College advocates the independent learning and student-centered education. Beiwai Online headquarters issue and announce course

information through the homepage of the college and teacher and student platforms. Students communicate with teachers with learning guide and feedback. As we know, in the traditional English teaching style in China, the teacher is the classroom dictator who spends most of class time spoon-feeding the knowledge instead of giving the student time for practice. Totally different from this traditional English teaching approach, Beiwai Online College advocates a new approach which shifts the emphasis to the learners and focuses on skill training instead of spoon-feeding. Prof. Gu Yueguo, Deputy Dean of the College, summarizes the philosophy of Beiwai Online as follows: to “encourage new teaching approaches, encourage learner-centered orientation, encourage learning process monitoring, emphasize communicative competence, encourage the integration of 5 skills, enhance classroom performance by teachers and learners, encourage learner self-assessment, encourage learning process/ strategy assessment, encourage the examination of communicative performance” (Gu, 2003, p. 29).

In the real teaching practice, the tutors in Beiwai Online College interact with students mainly through the following channels:

1. *Regular tutoring classes*: As Beiwai Online College mainly targets foreign language learners, the face-to-face tutoring classes conducted in local learning centers every other week are extremely important for the program. Most students attend the tutoring classes on a biweekly basis so they can meet their teachers and classmates and improve their own pronunciation. In these face-to-face tutoring sessions, the tutor is to administer and check the learning progress of the students and provide help according to their individual needs. Unlike traditional spoon-feeding in Chinese universities, the tutoring class provides a stage for students to demonstrate what they have learned on their own through various kinds of classroom activities, e.g., dialogues, role-plays, group discussions. The teacher is the organizer and supervisor, responsible for organizing all kinds of activities as well as monitoring the students' progress and supplying instant feedback.
2. *VOB*: Voice of Beiwai Online is a real time audio interactive service for students and teachers, which offers a variety of forms of chatting, lectures and office hours. Many students form up study groups here in

order to practice oral English. And the teachers often use it for real time communication with the students.

3. *VOC*: In Virtual Online Classrooms, teachers can use PowerPoint to deliver real time lectures to the students and have real time conversation with them. Teachers and students can interact through short messages using one-on-one interwise software.
4. *Emails*: Students often send emails to teachers to ask questions about various kinds of things. According to a survey conducted with my students, email is the most widely used method for students to interact with their tutor.
5. *Telephone office hour*: According to the requirements of Beiwai Online College, all tutors should give 2-hour fixed office hours to the students by telephone every week. According to the survey I conducted with my class, telephone is the second most used method for students to communicate with the teacher. Due to the limitation of distance education, students cannot attend the office hours on campus. Thus, telephone office hours provide them an opportunity to interact with the teachers regularly.
6. *Two forums*: There are two forums in Beiwai Online college. One is in the teacher and student platforms, in which the students can interact with the teacher and form study groups to share their experiences about English learning. The other is located on the homepage, which is open to all visitors of Beiwai Online homepage. The students can interact with the teachers and classmates in these two forums at any time, from anywhere, which really turn the disadvantage of distance learning into an advantage.

Like SLN, Beiwai Online College has not only encouraged teachers in their teaching practice, but also has conducted researches to study their function in the new pedagogical dimensions. A report written by two young scholars from Beiwai Online, Wang Tong and Yang Liu, has supplied us with some new perspectives about the role of Beiwai Online tutors. In this report, the authors define the teacher in Beiwai Online local learning centers as a “tutor,” who should attend to the individual needs of the students, supervise and examine the progress of students. They emphasized that a Beiwai Online tutor is different from an English teacher in a traditional sense. His/ her

function is to advocate students' independent studies, motivate them to study on their own, supervise and control their performance. However, in reality, some tutors have become so accustomed to the traditional Chinese way of teaching English that they cannot adjust to their new role as a tutor in Beiwai Online College. They still use the traditional self-centered style and spoon-feeding method to teach English in the tutoring class. These teachers need to make adjustments and adopt the new roles of "tutor" of Beiwai Online which are defined by Gu (2003, p. 5) in the training manual of Beiwai Online College:

1. Assessor—assess what the learner can already do, what progress the learner is making, and what the learner is able to do after a period of learning.
2. Supervisor—supervise what the learner does before and after class.
3. Instructor—give instructions to what the learner does in class with the materials.
4. Teacher—teach the materials to the learner.
5. Manager—manage all the resources and class activities to the best advantage.
6. Information provider—provide the information requested by the learner.
7. Friend—befriend the learner.

From this we can see that "the tutor" in Beiwai Online College is different from the teacher in a traditional sense due to the new student-teacher relationship in distance education and the unique learning environment. However, adopting a student-centered approach does not mean teachers are relieved of all responsibilities. In fact, the teacher has to do more in the distance-learning environment and his importance should never be overlooked. Besides the above mentioned roles, he should also be the counselor, the facilitator, the motivator, the manager. Also, for language learners in the case of Beiwai Online, interaction with tutors on Beiwai online platform and face-to-face tutoring in classroom are all especially useful for language learning. Obviously, the experience of Beiwai Online tells us that the teacher is indispensable in assisting students in distance education.

## **DISCUSSION**

SLN and Beiwai Online are two different learning systems in two different countries, so their teaching practices have differences as well as similarities. Below is a brief comparison of SLN instructor and Beiwai online tutor in the following aspects concerning how teachers function in these two online systems.

### **Pedagogy**

Modern distance learning not only means a change of the media for learning but also the philosophy of teaching. One thing that is similar between these two systems is that both systems advocate the student-centered approach. but both hold that teachers are important in distance learning. Teachers have missions in directing the students to do well in distance environment and their work now is more challenging.

### **Interaction**

Both systems emphasize the need for interaction between the teacher and students and demand the teacher to supply immediate feedback to students. However, there is a difference in their interaction styles. In SLN, the majority of teaching activities and the interaction between the students and teachers are conducted through the SLN platform. Only when the course becomes very complex will teachers deliver face-to-face classes to make up the insufficiency of online education. However, in Beiwai Online College the interaction between the teacher and student is not confined to the platform from the beginning. The teachers and the students meet regularly in biweekly tutoring classes, which is necessary for language learning. In addition, Beiwai Online College tutors provide all kinds of online support to the students through VOB, VOC, email, telephone office hours, forum and other offline activities, all of which are essential for language learners.

## **The Community**

In distance education, the students are isolated by time and locations and are struggling alone in the pursuit of knowledge. It is the teacher's responsibility to build up the online community to reduce their loneliness. Both in SLN and Beiwai Online, the instructor or the tutor act like an organizer, and adopt various methods to interact with the students and build up communities through the Bulletin board, chat room, telephone, email, AOL messenger, etc. Also, both systems try to create a common culture for the community so as to cultivate the students' loyalty. Comparatively speaking, Beiwai Online College emphasized more in establishing the offline communities. Every local learning center organizes extracurricular activities to help students to learn English. Every year Beiwai Online College invites the best tutors and students throughout China to come to Beijing headquarters for a get-together so as to realize the virtual community. This kind of face-to-face meetings with teachers and peers can greatly stimulate the teacher-student, student-student interaction thus enhancing the cohesion of the community.

## **Online Resources**

The teachers of both systems have made great efforts collecting, gathering and integrating resources for students. SLN instructor mainly does this through the sections of "shared references" and "bulletin board" while Beiwai Online College provides resources through the student's platform. Beiwai Online College is also planning to set up an online electronic library on its platform. Although the teachers in both systems are fully aware of the importance of providing resources to students in cyberspace, Beiwai Online tends to provide more audio materials than SLN as they are very important for language learners.

## **Assessment**

The teachers in both systems assess their students regularly according to

their performance. SLN instructors grade the students according to their postings online and also their online assignments (papers). In Beiwai Online, tutors grade their students partially according to the online submission of students' homework and partially according to the written and oral exams conducted at the end of the term in each local learning center. These face-to-face exams conducted by Beiwai Online tutors are important for language learning, as in this way, the students' performance can be evaluated more accurately and precisely.

### **The Rate between Face-to-face Tutoring and Online Distance Teaching**

Although SLN and Beiwai Online are distance education systems which mainly rely on information technology to teach, appropriate amount of face-to-face tutoring has been used by both to make teacher's function more effective. The two systems differ in the rate between face to face tutoring and online teaching. In SLN, the instructors or the TA's will only give face-to-face tutoring sessions when the course becomes really difficult, while in Beiwai Online, face-to-face tutoring classes play a significant part in its teaching activities, which is very important for language learners. The students meet their tutors and classmates every other week to learn, practice, improve and seek help especially in listening and pronunciation, as language learning will be more effective in face-to-face interactions. The survey results also show that the majority of Beiwai Online students benefit from the biweekly tutoring class.

In summary, although the instructor in SLN and the tutor in Bewai Online have different pedagogies, they all have to adjust to their new roles in order to function well in the distance context.

### **PROPOSED NEW ROLES OF TEACHERS IN DISTANCE LEARNING**

Through the above comparison, we can see that although these two

distance-learning systems are in different countries, they have illustrated some common rules that may benefit all distance educators. To sum up, to become a qualified teacher in distance education, one should at least assume the following roles:

### **The Role of Motivator**

He/she must be willing to assume a new role as a motivator, and work hard to stimulate students in online environment. As the saying goes, “great teachers inspire”, the teacher must be willing to understand the difficulties that the students face in distance learning, to stimulate their initiative and encourage them to create social presence. To achieve this goal, a teacher must learn more about distance education himself.

### **The Role of Supervisor**

Although in online courses the teacher is separate from the students, it does not mean the teacher can take a *lasses faire* attitude toward the students. Instead, he should take a closer look at the students so as to supervise their progress, and give them more direction. The teacher should monitor the students and pay attention to their concerns. Without the direction of the teacher, the student may get lost or get out of the control in cyberspace, so it is the teacher’s duty to guide them. In one word, teachers must work hard so as to stimulate the students and monitor their progress.

### **The Role of Course Designer**

As a distance educator, one must acquire new instructional designing ability and his/her teaching ability parameter is no longer 2-dimensional, but in 3 dimensions. And he/she must be willing to master new ways to design and maintain the course materials on the Internet. While doing this, he/she must understand the students’ difficulties and be willing to navigate and

assist them.

### **The Role of Organizer**

To reduce the loneliness of the students in distance learning, the teacher should act as an organizer to conduct all kinds of activities in the online context. With the goal to develop online communities, the teacher must be willing to interact with the students, be skillful in creating a friendly online environment and organizing online activities. In this way, the students will not feel the loneliness caused by the physical absence of the teacher and the peer group.

### **The Role of Resources Provider**

A distance educator is responsible to provide resources to the students. To enrich online resources, he has to collect, organize, integrate and upload the resources on the Internet. He/she has to develop educational resources himself for the students. However, more important, he/she has to teach students how to make use of and search for online resources independently.

### **The Role of Assessor**

To make distance education more effective, a distance educator should also remember his role as an assessor. He/she should supply timely feedback about students' performance so that they know where their problems reside and improve according to the advice. Also in the distance-learning context, some lazy students may take advantage of online learning and plagiarize the work of others and post them on the web to gain credit. In one word, in distance learning, the teacher must make a special effort to check the integrity of the students, evaluate the originality of their work and guard against plagiarism.

To sum up, to be a good distance educator, the teacher must be willing to

take up the roles as a motivator, organizer, supervisor, course designer, resource provider and assessor. He/she must accept the challenges of updating the computer skills and keep up with the latest development of the information technology.

## **CONCLUSION**

Quoting a well-known Chinese proverb, “teaching benefits students as well as teachers.” This is especially true in the case of distance learning. With the mission to direct, stimulate, organize, supervise and evaluate students in the cyberspace, teachers have to improve their teaching methodology and explore new pedagogical principles. Currently, more and more teachers are facing the transition from traditional classroom teaching to modern distance education. Only the ones with updated computer skills and better understanding of the new pedagogies can successfully make it. Instructors in SLN and tutors of Beiwai Online are good examples. Distance education not only provides teachers with new challenges but also new dreams and new opportunities.

## **THE AUTHOR**

Gui Ying received a BA degree and an MA degree from the Department of Foreign Languages of Nanjing University. In 1993-1994, she studied in Johns Hopkins-Nanjing Center for American Studies. Then she taught in Nanjing University. In 1998, she went as an exchange scholar to study in SUNY at Albany in the US. In 2002, she obtained an MS degree in Curriculum Development and Instructional Technology from SUNY at Albany. She went back to China and has taught in the Department of Foreign Languages in Shanghai University of Finance and Economics in Shanghai.

## REFERENCES

- Cheng, L., & Lin, B. (2003). Study of Piaget's constructivism dynamics Model on all-round development education. *Journal of Fu Jian Normal University (Philosophy and social Science Edition)*, 3, 122-127.
- Gao, R., & Kong, W. (2003, Feb). Interaction in distance learning environment. *Educational Technology for Foreign Language Teaching*, 2, 73-75.
- Gu, Y. (2003). Teacher's guide to active English. *Beiwai Online 2003 Tutor Training Workshop*, 29.
- Na, U. A., & Kimble, C. (2003). Supporting the creation of social presence in online learning communities using asynchronous text-based CMC. In *Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Technology in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* (pp. 295-300). Heidelberg, Germany.
- Offir, B., & Lev, Y. (1999). Teacher-learner interaction in the process of operating DL (distance learning) systems. *Education Media International*, 36(2), 132-137.
- Rourke, L., Anderson, T., Garrison, D. R., & Archer, W. (1999). Assessing social presence in asynchronous, text-based computer conferencing. *Journal of Distance Education*, 14(3), 51-70.
- Short, J., Williams, E., & Christie, B. (1976). *The social psychology of telecommunications*. Toronto: Wiley.
- Swan, K. (2003). Developing social presence in online course discussion. In S. Naidu (Ed.), *Learning and teaching with technology: Principles and practices* (pp. 147-164). London, Kogan.
- Swan, K. (2002). Building learning communities in online courses: The importance of interaction. *Education, Communication & Information*, 2(1), 23-50.
- Tammelin, M. (1998). From telepresence to social presence: The role of presence in a network-based learning environment. *Media Education Publication*, 8, 219-231.
- Wang, S., & Li, L. (2002). A study of the thoughts of Dewey and Piaget in subjective participation. *Studies in Foreign Education*, 12, 1-5.
- Wang, T., & Yang, L. (2003). A survey analysis on online English teaching quality. *Educational Technology for Foreign Language Teaching*, 91, 22-26.
- Weiner, M., & Mehrabian, O. (1968). *A language within language: Immediacy, a channel in verbal communication*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.