

### Conceptual Basis for the Study

The researchers do an excellent job of developing the logical and theoretical basis for this study. As more and more distance education course offerings become available, particularly via the Web, issues such as attrition, achievement, and learner satisfaction become fundamentally important. The researchers cite a Web-based course recently offered by the National Pork Producer's Council as a telling example of the extent to which attrition can be a major problem in distance education adult course offerings. The researchers frame their study around principles of adult education and four major constructs that in theory may explain attrition rates and patterns. They also include technology considerations, computer self-efficacy, and instructional design in this theoretical model. These theories provide a very solid basis for designing and conducting the study. A more complete presentation of key findings from the literature (for the variables under study) would have made the conceptual basis for this study very solid.

### Procedural Considerations

This investigation used qualitative research approaches - very appropriate for the stated purpose and objectives. The procedures section of the paper clearly described the techniques used for each stage of data collection and analysis. Respondents were usefully grouped into course designers, course completers, course non-completers, and course non-completers who completed no lessons. The variables under investigation were linked to the conceptual basis previously presented. The findings were appropriately summarized and well organized. The narrative and tabular comparisons between completers and non-completers were excellent.

### Contributions to the Field

The researchers did an excellent job in moving from the findings to presenting sound and useful conclusions and recommendations. At the first level, there was incongruity between the course content and the expertise of the students - the course was too elementary for most of those who enrolled. At a second level, an intriguing response occurred when completers chose to "complete what they had started," even though they had serious questions about the value of the course for them. Non-completers showed a lack of discipline and persistence in completing the course. The suggestions presented by the researchers for developing instructional courses or modules for adult distance learners were excellent and should be useful in a variety of contexts.