# CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING THE SOCIAL CAPITAL OF THE NWU DISTANCE LEARNING COMMUNITY

**C. Du Toit-Brits**
School of Education
North-West University Potchefstroom Campus
Potchefstroom, South Africa
e-mail: Charlene.dutoit@nwu.ac.za

## ABSTRACT

Discussions of dialogue have been at the heart of Distance Learning (well known in the theories of Borge, Holmberg and Moore). This theoretical article focuses on formulating criteria for evaluating the social capital of a particular Distance Learning community, at the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus (NWU), and attempts to put forward specific thoughts regarding the importance of dialogue as a key pedagogical method within the Distance Learning setting at NWU through which social capital is being shaped. A number of educationalists recently re-examined the position that dialogue occupies in the Distance Learning setting. Distance Learning is to facilitate through a distance; these students and lecturers are divided physically in occasion and space. Consequently, Distance Learning students and lecturers lack the communal physical attendance that is imperative for communication. In Distance Learning, many communication pathways are imprecise. This article specifically deals with the essentially dialogic nature of the educational dialogue in Distance Learning, and the need to establish criteria for evaluating the social capital of a particular Distance Learning community.

**Keywords:** dialogue, distance learning, community, educational dialogue, social capital

## 1. DIALOGUE IN DISTANCE LEARNING

In this article I first provide explanations of dialogue in Distance Learning, taking a closer look at Holmberg's sympathy approach and Moore's transactional distance

model (Holmberg 1989, 2003; Moore 1984, 1989, 1990, 1993, 2002, 2004, 2007). I then provide criteria by which to judge whether a particular Distance Learning community, more specifically Distance Learning at NWU, suffers from a lack of social capital, and to evaluate the extent to which Distance Learning in that community may be suffering from a lack of social capital.

Moore and Holmberg have attempted to establish practical methodologies for dialogue in Distance Learning. In 1993 Moore expanded his definition to 'A dialogue is purposeful, constructive and valued by each party. Each party in a dialogue is a respectful and active listener; each is a contributor, and builds on the contributions of the other party or parties ... the direction of a dialogue in an educational relationship is towards improved understanding of the student' (Moore 1993, 24). Their opinions regarding the significance of dialogue propose an understanding that focuses on the personality of dialogue. Another researcher, Beaudoin, argues that education has to be perceptible for it to take place (Beaudoin 1983, 2002, 121). He seems to say that in Distance Learning a deeper dimension of dialogue is necessary. Let us take a closer look at what dialogue actually is.

## 1.1.  Dialogue as a constituent of human beings – thus part of the distance learning student

As human beings we share the ability to communicate with various other creatures on earth. The urge to connect is among the fundamental motivations that help humans to stay alive. Human beings interact and commune with others through dialogue (Du Toit 2011). Dialogue is, for that reason, an integral part of an individual's development and survival. Although dialogue is ontological in character, I view it more as epistemological, particularly in educational circumstances. Dialogue is, therefore, an intrinsic feature of human survival, also affecting how Distance Learning is presented, especially at NWU. This article focuses on the importance of dialogue in Distance Learning at NWU; dialogue is, therefore, the *sine qua non* for any pedagogical relationship. This article also specifically deals with the need to establish criteria for evaluating the social capital of this particular Distance Learning community.

## 1.2.  Holmberg and Moore's conventional views of dialogue in distance learning

Distance Learning exists inside a different framework from traditional face-to-face classroom teaching, the separation of lecturer and student being the main characteristic of Distance Learning. As the use of ICT increases possibilities for Distance Learning, it also bridges the physical distance between lecturer and student. Du Toit (2011) has documented the importance of dialogue in Distance Learning for bridging the sense of isolation and loneliness experienced by Distance Learning students. In Distance

Learning, empathy and personal relations between the stakeholders must be regarded as pivotal to its survival (Du Toit 2011; Du Toit-Brits, Pogieter and Hongwane 2012). Holmberg (1983, 2003), Henry (1992), Burbules (1993), Saba and Shearer (1994), Shearer (2009) and Du Toit (2011) are not alone in acknowledging the importance of dialogue in Distance Learning. Moore also focuses on the importance of dialogue in his Transactional Distance Theory (Moore and Kearsley 2005, 223–227). In Moore's theory, three variables, namely, dialogue, structure and autonomy are paramount. Moore confirmed that a student's capability to take on self-directed learning, is prejudiced by transactional distance. Transactional distance can be alleviated by the extent of structure introduced into the Distance Learning course and the extent of dialogue introduced by the lecturer (Moore and Kearsley 2005, 225).

Moore also discusses dialogue and structure as two adverse ideas. If sufficient dialogue exists, less structure is necessary and on the other hand, the more structure exists, the less significant dialogue is needed. The author's view, however, is that sufficient structure generates dialogue, and dialogue in turn generates structure. If such an approach could be applied in a Distance Learning environment, it might display both high and low transactional distance simultaneously (Du Toit 2011). Distance learning students must obtain experience in dialogue, and this emerges from the construction of communication, which is vital in any kind of Distance Learning environment. Structure is thus being built up through dialogue. The structure that is employed in a Distance Learning setting, will establish the channels and the kind of communication that exist in that setting.

Moore further contends that the student should be held accountable for engaging in the learning process. This power that the student has to engage is best managed through dialogue. Consequently, in Distance Learning, two theories appear to be the best known: Holmberg's Empathy Approach and the theory of Moore's Transactional Distance. Individually, both of these theories position dialogue as central to Distance Learning and state that it should be implemented and manipulated by the specific institution as well as the distance lecturer.

On the other side, Holmberg's theory is connected with three theoretical stands: the *empathy approach*, *guided didactic conversation*, and Distance Learning as facilitating *a one-to-one relationship between tutor and learner*. Holmberg's theory clarifies that feelings of empathy, compassion, understanding and belonging promote students' motivation to study and consequently influence their learning.

The only individuals to support a conversational style are Holmberg, Schuemer and Obermeier (1982). In their research they raise questions regarding the nature of dialogue, and the feelings of personal relations between the Distance Learning student and lecturer. A negative point concerning Holmberg's theory is that it underrates the importance of dialogue and the vital role it has to play in Distance Learning.

## 1.3. The essentially dialogic nature of the educational dialogue in distance learning

The co-existence referred to by Langeveld (1968, 158) and Heidegger (1977, 161) points to the perpetual existential need of one human being for another. Moreover, it points to the dialogical capacity and range of *age* – regarding who is directing the appeal and who is answering the appeal. From birth, an individual declares his/her lifelong independence on his/her fellows (Potgieter 2006). This symbolises the early stages of educational dialogue, but also of the essentially dialogic nature and environment of educational dialogue (Potgieter 2006). The educand exists in open communication with the world, but exists in inter-communication with the people with whom he shares this world (Levinas 1969, 175; Freire 1998; Du Toit 2011; Du Toit-Brits and Potgieter 2013).

To obtain knowledge of how to act in a way suitable to culture and society, therefore, cannot and should not be left to educands, or fate alone (Kozleski and Waitoller 2010). The educand must be guided and taught how to do this (Kozleski and Skelton 2007), and for this educational association and formative relationship to be authentically effected, dialogue is of the essence (Du Toit 2011; Du Toit-Brits, Potgieter and Hongwane 2012). Bandura (2002, 109) supports this by contending that one of the functions of dialogue is its 'personalising responsibility (of) improving others'. Ertmer and Newby (1993, 15) emphasise the function of pedagogical dialogue as a reflection instrument, as a particular type of thinking that is decisive for transforming the understanding that the educand gains in pedagogical encounters (1993, 18). Lefstein (2006, 3) contends that the educand 'is driven to dialogue by the consciousness of his own ignorance and longing for knowledge', while Freire (1998, 2000, 47), Burbules and Berk (1999, 9) argue that one of the purposes of pedagogical dialogue should be to assess social and communal communications, social relationships, social traditions and social dynamics, to establish the educand's cultural action for freedom. They regard dialogue as one of the key pedagogical methods of promoting this kind of appraisal and analysis (Burbules and Berk 1999, 19; Riestenberg 2012).

While comparing the etymology of the word 'dialogue' with present-day definitions, it became evident that such definitions tend to remain inside a relatively narrow semantic range in close proximity to the original connotation of 'dialogue' and 'dialogical'. A study of dictionary definitions of the noun 'dialogue' has shown that the majority give similar explanations. Based on axial coding[1] (De Vos 2005; Ertmer 1997; Punch 1998) and a subsequent critical heuristic examination of these definitions of the term 'dialogue', I draw the following nine conclusions as far as the essential properties of dialogue per se are concerned (Du Toit 2011; Riestenberg 2012):

a.  Authentic (genuine) dialogue finds its meaning in the fact that humans are essentially meaning-searching and meaning-finding beings.

b.   In order to search effectively for meaning, humans are obliged to engage in dialogue – not only with each other, but also with the world, as well as with their own emotions and spirituality.

c.   For authentic interpersonal dialogue to be effected humans' actions must demonstrate purpose and intention; they must be deliberately aimed at inducing mutual motivation, empowerment, entrustment and commitment (being together).

d.   The relation(s), form, method(s) and meaning of authentic dialogue from humans should be communally approachable, open-minded and dedicated. Their dialoguing encounters should generate and preserve an environment of closeness, belonging, intended interaction, genuine relationship (cooperation / collaboration) as well as acceptance, calmness, mutual acceptance and altruistic reciprocity.

e.   The content and meaning of dialogue should be engaging and influencing; show the way towards productive response and truthful self-revelation. It must be agreement-seeking and resolution-oriented and it should acknowledge, nurture and foster self-determination and characterisation. It should also be skill-based and intend open, transparent knowledge-sharing.

f.   When the (a) purpose, (b) content and (c) relation / form of dialogue (together with their constituent essential characteristics) all function *effectively*, dialogue intensifies to valid, reliable *communication*.

Considering the above argument, dialogue in Distance Learning is thus an imperative.

## 2.   THE EXISTENCE OF DIALOGUE IN DISTANCE LEARNING AS A KEY PEDAGOGICAL METHOD OF PROMOTING SOCIAL CAPITAL IN DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMMES (AT NWU)

The idea of social capital is believed to have originally appeared in Hanifan's discussion of rural school community centres (Hanifan 1916, 1920). Hanifan used the expression to reveal 'those concrete substances that count for most in the daily lives of individuals (1916, 130). He was apprehensive with the development of kindness, companionship, understanding and communal relations among those that construct up a social unit' (Smith 2007). Contributions from Jacobs (1961) in relation to metropolitan existence and neighbourliness, Bourdieu (1983) with regard to social theory, and Coleman (1988) in his discussion of the social environment (dialogue) of education, propelled the idea into the academic arena. Nevertheless, it was the research of Robert Putnam (1993, 2000), Fukuyama (1996, 1999) and Field (2003) that launched social capital as a topic for research and policy conversations. Social capital has also been picked up by the World Bank as a helpful organising concept; growing proof shows that social unity is significant for societies to flourish economically and for development to be sustainable

(The World Bank 1999). Bourdieu **(**1983, 249–250) **explains that s**ocial capital could be understood as the aggregate of the actual resources that are related to possession of a resilient system of more or less institutionalised associations of communal acquaintance and acknowledgment. Coleman (1994, 302) **surmises that s**ocial capital is defined by its purpose. He is persuaded that it is not a solitary unit, but rather a diversity of entities, having two features in common: they all have a number of features of a social structure, and they promote certain actions of individuals inside the structure (dialogue) (Du Toit 2011).

Putnam (2000, 19) associates social capital with connections and relations amongst individuals – social networks (dialogue) and the norms of reciprocity and dependability that originate from them. For Putnam, a society of many virtuous but isolated individuals is not essentially rich in social capital. John Field (2003) maintains that the fundamental argument of social capital theory is the reality that relationships and interactions do matter. Interaction (dialogue) enables individuals to construct communities and to commit themselves to one another, so that a sense of belonging and the existing understanding of social networks might advantage persons significantly. Trust and reliance among individuals thus becomes trust and reliance among strangers and a broad range of social institutions. In the end, it provides a united set of principles within a society (thus the NWU Distance Learning programmes) as a whole (Du Toit 2011). Lacking dialogue, at a certain point relations and trust decay, manifesting in the kind of social problems that South Africa is currently experiencing. The idea of social capital implies that building or rebuilding community and trust requires dialogue, which depends on, among other things, mutual gratitude, neighbourliness, kindness, social commitment and social relations (Burbules and Berk 1999, 19; Du Toit 2011; Riestenberg 2012).

Fukuyama (1996, 1999) describes social capital as the maintenance of principles or standards shared between associates of a group (e.g. a group of students in a Distance Learning Programme). The experience of living (as well as studying) in close-knit and supportive communities (in the NWU Distance Learning Programmes) can be stimulating (Stein 2004; Du Toit 2011).

Grounded on my investigation into the theory of social capital, I decided to set *social connectedness* (Du Toit 2011; Du Toit-Brits, Potgieter and Hongwane 2012; Du Toit-Brits and Potgieter 2013) as the all-embracing norm for creating the degree to which policies on Distance Learning can contribute to social capital building (Du Toit 2011). It is obvious that the norm of social connectedness may favour both an idiographic (personal, individual) and a nomothetic (a social, societal) polarity, depending on its apparent role and meaning at any given point in time. On an idiographic level, social connectedness is accomplished through the expression of dependability, belonging, communication, thoughtfulness, dependency, confidence and neighbourliness (Du Toit 2011). On a nomothetic level, social connectedness is accomplished through interconnectedness, openness, social cohesion, interaction, social norms and values,

co-operation, comradeship, interdependence, communal accomplishment, communal appreciation, social relationships, sharing, commitment, open-mindedness and harmony (Du Toit 2011).

To judge whether a particular Distance Learning community suffers from a lack of social capital, and to evaluate the extent to which Distance Learning in that community may also be suffering from a lack of social capital, a set of appropriate criteria is needed.

# 3. CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING THE SOCIAL CAPITAL OF THE NWU DISTANCE LEARNING COMMUNITY (SOCIETY)

Based on my interpretive analysis of social capital (Du Toit 2011), I have formulated the following criteria (Du Toit, 2011), introducing them against the backdrop of Woolcock's (2001) difference concerning the three key types of social capital.

## 3.1. The idiographic level

- To what extent does a deep bond of *social connectedness* exist between NWU as service provider and the Distance Learning student, and to what extent does the one exist for the sake of the other and not for its own sake?

- To what extent does a true *encounter* between all parties[2] in the NWU Distance Learning community exist, without any obligation – moral or otherwise – on the part of any of the parties to participate in these encounters, and to what extent are these encounters characterised by mutual trust, proven trustworthiness and an honest, welcoming openness of one to the other?

- To what extent does an *en*-countering social connectedness exist between parties regarding their relationship with its three sub-criteria, namely: (a) *bonding social capital* (own culture, own customs, own language, etc.), (b) *bridging social capital* (to demonstrate open and honest loving and caring regard for the other, creating a broader identity and social connectedness) and (c) *linking social capital* (the extent to which trustworthy networking with other Distance Learning learners exists).

## 3.2. The nomothetic level

- To what extent does a deep bond of collective *social connectedness* exist between all members of the NWU Distance Learning community?

- To what extent does the NWU Distance Learning community's dialogue benefit the welfare of the entire community?

- To what extent does the NWU Distance Learning community's interconnectedness promote the values and norms of that particular Distance Learning community?

- To what extent are the values and norms of individual members of the NWU Distance Learning community subsumed and underpinned by the values, norms and demands of propriety of the entire community?

- To what extent does dialogue of the NWU Distance Learning community reflect genuine, honest fellowship, sociability, social tolerance and unity?

- To what extent does an *en*-countering, collective social connectedness exist between members of the NWU Distance Learning community, together with its three sub-criteria, namely: (a) *bonding social capital* (endorsing their own culture, their own customs, their own language, etc.), (b) *bridging social capital* (to demonstrate open and honest loving and caring regard for other Distance Learning communities, creating a broader group and national identity and social connectedness) and (c) *linking social capital* (the extent to which trustworthy networking with other Distance Learning communities exists).

## 3.3.  Balancing idiographic and nomothetic polarities

- To what extent are the idiographic and the nomothetic polarities of social connectedness within the NWU Distance Learning community harmoniously balanced?

- To what extent does the behaviour of individual role-players within the NWU Distance Learning community mirror the collective *bonding social capital* of the community itself?

- To what extent do the members of the NWU Distance Learning community willingly and freely observe the demands of propriety of the values and norms of the community to which they belong?

- These proposed criteria formulated by Du Toit (2011) can be used at any Distance Learning Institution to judge whether that particular Distance Learning community suffers from a lack of social capital, and to evaluate the extent to which Distance Learning in that community may also be suffering from a lack of social capital. However, for the purpose of this theoretical article, criteria were formulated applicable to the Distance Learning programmes at NWU only.

## 4. WRAPPING UP

It can be concluded that dialogue is the *sine qua non* for any educational connection, including Distance Learning at NWU. One of the functions of dialogue is its 'personalising responsibility and answerability (of) improving others' (Bandura 2002; Potgieter 2006). The Distance Learning student at NWU is driven to dialogue by the realisation of his or her own passion for knowledge. The purposes of educational dialogue should be to assess, for example, communal communications, interactions, social relationships and social traditions. Dialogue can be perceived as one of the main educational approaches for promoting this kind of evaluation and analyses. The meaning of dialogue demands that individuals be mutually approachable, sociable**,** accessible, open-minded and devoted; their dialoguing meetings should generate and preserve a Distance Learning environment of closeness, belonging, interaction, genuine connection and cooperation / collaboration as well as acceptance and mutual acceptance at NWU. The existence of dialogue in the NWU Distance Learning community is thus a key pedagogical method for promoting social capital.

Accordingly, on an idiographic level, the NWU Distance Learning community do (or should do) their utmost to cultivate dialogue, mutual trust and dependability among all individual role-players. For successful social connectedness, dialogue and sincere mutual trust and trustworthiness must exist between individual role-players and stake-holders (Du Toit 2011). This is a prerequisite for the cultivation of *bonding social capital* (Woolcock 2001, 13–14), which is essentially more inward looking and has a tendency to reinforce the identity and homogeneity of a particular Distance Learning community (Putnam 2000, 22; Smith 2007). Mutual trust and dependability will encourage precise reciprocity, mobilise harmony and strengthen the characteristics of that particular Distance Learning community. It will align the students' discipline with the socially accepted principles and norms that triumph within their specific Distance Learning community.

On an idiographic level, the NWU Distance Learning community should, by cultivating a sense of belonging, furthermore, endorse successful, honest, dialogue and genuine goodwill (Du Toit 2011). This will ensure that *bridging social capital* (Woolcock 2001, 13–14), which encompasses more remote ties between like persons, such as study group friendships, and encourages trust, openness and dependability between fellow students. It will also guarantee an educationally acceptable, outward-looking environment, where people may connect across different social boundaries, and communicate and bond with each other. It will also endorse the creation of connections to external resources and the generation of broader identities and mutual benefit than would have been possible through the promotion of social capital alone (Putnam 2000, 23; Smith 2007).

Lastly, on an idiographic level, all role-players within the NWU Distance Learning community should do their utmost to endorse and preserve social connectedness

through the expansion of dialogue, the cultivation of neighbourliness, commitment, acceptance, compassion and understanding in their students (Du Toit 2011). This will further Woolcock's notion of *linking social capital* – meaning the type of social capital that reaches out to unlike people in dissimilar situations, such as those who are entirely outside the community – thus enabling members to access a far wider range of resources than are available within the community (Woolcock 2001, 13–14). As far as the idiographic polarity of social connectedness is concerned, it is important to understand that individual Distance Learning students at NWU are morally and educationally obliged to achieve significant quantities of bonding and connecting social capital themselves, so that they will be able to make capital investments in their own communities and the learners they teach. This should subsequently be the focus when providing education to children and students at university.

## NOTES

1. During axial coding data are reorganised in new ways by making connections between essential features, categories, etc.
2. Between educator and learner, between educators, between learners, between educators and parents, between parents and learners, etc.

## REFERENCES

Bandura, A. 2002. Social cognitive theory in cultural context. *Applied Psychology* 51(2): 269–290.

Beaudoin, M. F. 2002. Learning or lurking? Tracking the 'invisible' online student. *Internet and Higher Education* 5: 147–155.

Bourdieu, P. 1983. Forms of capital. In *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education,* ed. J. C. Richards. New York: Greenwood Press.

Burbules, N. C. 1993. *Dialogue in teaching* (Vol. 10). New York: Teachers College Press.

Burbules, N. C. and R. Berk. 1999. Critical thinking and critical pedagogy: Relations, differences, and limits. In *Critical theories in education,* ed. T. S. Popkewitz and L. Fendler, 45–66. New York, NY: Routledge.

Coleman, J. C. 1988. Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American Journal of Sociology* 94: S95–S120.

Coleman, J. C. 1990, 1994. *Foundations of social theory*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Colletta, N. J. 2003. Human security, poverty, and conflict: Reform of international financial institutions. In *Human insecurity in a global world,* ed. L. Chen, S. Fukuda-Parr and J. Seidenstricker, 215–243. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

De Vos, A. S. 2005. Qualitative data analysis and interpretation. In *Research at grassroots for the social sciences and human service professions,* ed. A. S. de Vos, H. Strydom, C. B. Fouche and C. S. L. Delport, 333–349. 3rd ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Du Toit, C. 2011. Riglyne vir effektiewe onderwys vir afkampusonderwysprogramme vir praktiserende onderwysers. Unpulished PhD thesis. Faculty of Education Sciences, North-West University, Potchefstroom.

Du Toit-Brits, C., F. J. Potgieter and V. A. Hongwane. 2012. Distance education as a 'WE-NESS': A case for ubuntu as a theoretical framework. *Progressio* 34(2): 3–16.

Ertmer, P. A. and T. J. Newby. 1993. Behaviorism, cognitivism, constructivism: Comparing critical features from an instructional design perspective. *Performance Improvement Quaterly* 6(4): 50–72.

Ertmer, P. A. 1997. Common qualitative research designs. In *Practical research. Planning and designing,* ed. P. D. Leedy, 155–172. 6th ed. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Freire, P. 1998. *Pedagogy of freedom: Ethics, democracy, and civic courage*. Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield.

Freire, P. 2000. *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* New York, NY: Continuum.

Field, J. 2003. *Social capital*. London: Routledge.

Fukuyama, F. 1996. *Trust: The social virtues and the creation of prosperity*. New York: Free Press.

Fukuyama, F. 1999. *The great disruption. Human nature and the reconstitution of social order*. London: Profile Books.

Hanifan, L. J. 1916. The rural school community center. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 67: 130–138.

Hanifan, L. J. 1920. *The community center*. Boston: Silver Burdett.

Heidegger, M. 1977. *Sein und Zeit*. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann.

Henri, F. 1992. Computer conferencing and content analysis. In *Collaborative learning through computer conferencing: The Najaden papers* 90, ed. A. R. Kaye, 117–136. New York: Springer-Verlag.

Holmberg B., R. Schuemer and A. Obermeier. 1982. *Zur Effizienz des gelenkten didaktischen Gespräches* (with a summary in English). Hagen: FernUniveität, ZIFF.

Holmberg, B. 1989. The concepts and applications of distance education and open learning. Paper presented at the 7th International Conference on new concepts in higher education on, 12–15 December 1989. Bangkok. Unpublished.

Holmberg, B. 2003. A theory of distance education based on empathy. In *Handbook of distance education,* ed. M. G. Moore and W. G. Anderson, 113–127. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Kozleski, E. B. and S. M. Skelton. 2007. Culturally responsive leadership. Available at http://www.nccrest.org/events/culturally_responsive_leadership_2.ppt (accessed 18 June 2014).

Kozleski, E. B. and F. R. Waitoller. 2010. Teacher learning for inclusive education: Understanding teaching as a cultural and political practice. *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 14: 655–666.

Langeveld, M. J. 1968. *Beknopte Theoretische Pedagogik.* 10th Edition. Groningen: Wolters-Noordhof.

Lefstein, A. 2006. Paper 33: Dialogue in schools: Towards a pragmatic approach. Working Papers in Urban Language and Literacies, King's College, 1-16. Institute of Education, University of London.

Levinas, E. 1969. *Totality and infinity: An essay on exteriority.* Translated by Alphonso Lingis. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.

Moore, M. G. 1984. Independent study. In *Redefining the discipline of adult education,* ed. R. A. Boyd and J. W. Apps, 16–31. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Moore, M. G. 1989. Three types of interaction. *The American Journal of Distance Education* 3(2): 1–17.

Moore, M. 1990. Recent contributions to the theory of distance education. *Open Learning* 5(3): 10–15.

Moore, M. G. 1993. Theory of transactional distance. In *Theoretical principles of distance education,* ed. D. Keegan, 22–38. London: Routledge.

Moore, M. G. 2002. Information and communication technologies. In *Distance education. Specialized training course*. UNESCO.

Moore, M. G. 2004. Learner support. *The American Journal of Distance Education* 17(3): 141–143.

Moore, M. G. 2007. The theory of transactional distance. In *Handbook of distance education,* **e**d. M. G. Moore and W. G. Anderson, 59–105. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Moore, M. G. and G. Kearsley. 2005. *Distance education: A systems view.* 2nd ed. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

Potgieter, F. J. 2006. Mentoring school-based educators-in-training. Short course of the Faculty of Education Sciences Potchefstroom: North-West University.

Punch, K. 1998. *Introduction to social research. Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. London: SAGE.

Putnam, R. D. 1993. *Making democracy work. Civic traditions in modern Italy*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.

Putnam, R. D. 1995. Bowling alone: America's declining social capital. *Journal of Democracy* 6(1): 65–78.

Putnam, R. D. 2000. *Bowling alone. The collapse and revival of American community*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Riestenberg, N. 2012. *Circle in the square: Building community and repairing harm*. St. Paul, MN: Living Justice Press.

Saba, F. and R. L. Shearer. 1994. Verifying key theoretical concepts in a dynamic model of distance education. *The American Journal of Distance Education* 8(1): 36–59.

Shearer, R. L. 2009. Transactional distance and dialogue: An exploratory study to refine the theoretical construct of dialogue in online learning. Unpublished Dissertation. The Pennsylvania State University, University Park.

Smith, L. T. 2005. On tricky ground: Researching the native of the age of uncertainty. In *The Sage handbook of qualitative research,* ed. N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincold, 85−108. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Smith, M. K. 2007. Social capital. In *The Encyclopedia of Informal Education*. www.infed.org/biblio/social_capital.htm (accessed 7 May 2010).

Stein, S. J. 2004. *The culture of education policy*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Woolcock, M. and D. Narayan. 2000. Social capital: Implications for development theory, research, and policy. *The World Bank Research Observer* 15(2): 225–249.

Worldbank. 1999. 'What is social capital? PovertyNet. Available at http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/scapital/whatsc.htm (accessed 19 Aug. 2008).