

Manuscript Number: PO49

Manuscript Title: XXXXX

Reviewer #: 411

Date Review Completed: December 30, 2006

The review process calls for reviewer summary recommendation and open narrative comment.

I. **SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:** *Please select one*

_____ Conditionally Accept X Revise and Resubmit _____ Reject

Note: If you are recommending rejection, please state the main reasons in box 'f' below. If you are recommending conditional acceptance or revise and resubmit, please provide specific recommendations that will guide the authors in improving their work by completing boxes 'a-f' below.

II. **NARRATIVE ASSESMENT:** Type an assessment directed to the author(s) stressing the article's strengths and weaknesses. Indicate unresolved problems for publication and provide specific suggestions for improvement of the manuscript. In your narrative, consider the following criteria as appropriate. The *importance of the problem* means the degree to which the problem or subject contributes to knowledge or theory pertinent to adult education. *Methodological soundness* includes considering whether the methods are appropriate for addressing the research problem, and whether the manuscript includes an introduction to the problem, a stated purpose and research questions where appropriate, and a review of relevant literature. The *inferences and conclusions* should be pertinent and clearly drawn from the findings; importance to the field should be described. Finally, the manuscript should be *well organized, well written, and readable*.

Please use the following questions in your assessment. Simply click inside the box and begin typing. The text will wrap.

a. How important is the research and/or theoretical problem? How well-defined is the purpose?

The problem of the uncritical rush to online learning that is described in this piece is one that needs more critique and discussion in the field of adult education. The purpose of the article, intended for the AEQ Forum, section is well defined.

b. How well-developed and appropriate are the theoretical frameworks and literature reviews?

Comments in this area are enumerated below.

1. According to the authors, they "intend to use XXXX's theory of practice to inform [their] challenge of the dominant discourses around online education." However, only secondary references to XXXX's work are cited in the piece. An online search of my institution's library catalog revealed a number of accessible translated sources by XXXX so I would recommend using at least one original source. In addition, although XXXX's theory is cited early in the manuscript, it is not referred to at the end in the conclusion. If indeed XXXX's theory of practice is the means of challenging the dominant discourses, it is unclear why it is not referred to at the end. It would make a more powerful statement and carry through the supposed intent of the writers.
2. On page 5, in the section on the dominant discourse [in adult education], the discussion begins with a citation from XXXX, XXXX, and XXXX that is higher ed literature. The first citation from an adult educator is the one from XXXX. I don't believe that XXXX (the former president of the University of XX) would consider himself an adult educator. A

higher educator, yes, but not an adult educator. If indeed the dominant discourse in adult education is that adult education/adult higher education will change as a result of distance technology, then more adult educators need to be cited here.

3. Related to this point, I think that some of the folks cited at the end of the first paragraph of the article would be surprised to see their works interpreted as promoting distance education as “the salvation of education.” Perhaps that is how the authors of this piece interpreted these writers but it seems more than a bit of an exaggeration and needs to be toned down or rephrased to indicate that this is how the authors of the perceive the work. For example, I located and scanned the XXXX reference and it is a report of the development of social interaction in an online community. The research reported both favorable and unfavorable perspectives about online learning (from the student/subject participants). As far as I could tell this was not an article that extolled the virtues of cyber education as being not only the future but also the salvation of education. This kind of rhetoric needs to be eliminated or better supported by citations.
4. Related to point 3 above, XXXX is cited as being a proponent of distance education, etc. Again, the XXXX article is about how critical reflection on cultural differences takes place in computer conferencing—it is not an article advocating online learning. Refer to number 3 above for how to address this. It would be more fair to say that adult educators are using online education in greater numbers for a variety of reasons. For example, I teach online but that does not mean that I am an uncritical proponent of this method, meaning that I am unable to acknowledge the strengths and weaknesses of it.

c. How sound are the methodological approaches?

N/A and/or see above.

d. How well-supported and convincing are the inferences and conclusions? Are the theoretical and practical implications appropriately indicated?

See comments in a and b. XXXX’s theory needs to be used in the article’s concluding section to tie it together as the organizing element. The conclusions made about some of the citations are erroneous as suggested in b3. Although this article is supposedly about adult education/adult higher education, more higher ed references are used.

e. How well-organized, well-written, and readable is the manuscript?

Good in all aspects of this category.

f. Additional comments:

The article raises an important and needed critique of online education and the Bourdieu theory is an interesting lens to use for it. However, in an effort to raise awareness, the authors of this article have taken more than a few liberties with their interpretation of the literature. The following needs to be addressed in the revision:

1. Use of references actually written by XXXX instead of just secondary references to his work;
2. More continuity of XXXX theory at end
3. Better clarification that some literature is higher ed and being applied to adult ed
4. Tone down the rhetoric and ensure that literature cited is not misinterpreted.

III. **RETURN COMPLETED FORM:** Save this review as “[your reviewer number] review for [manuscript number]” e.g. *4455 review for B-001-A.doc*. Send the electronic file to AEQ via email at: aduldedquarterly@psu.edu