Perspectives on Educational Technology Research and Development

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This is the introductory article for the first issue of Educational Technology Research and Development *(ETR&D). The authors review the issues and process that led to the decision by the AECT Executive Board to co-publish* Educational Communication and Technology Journal *(ECTJ) and the* Journal of Instructional Development *(JID) in a new journal. The results of analyses of ECTJ and JID by Schwen and Middendorf (1987) and Dick and Dick (1989) are briefly summarized. The authors then report their own survey of AECT members to determine the topics and types of articles the members would prefer to read in ETR&D. Member preferences are compared with the actual content of the last ten issues of ECTJ and JID. Finally, the authors briefly discuss their own perspectives on ETR&D.*

□ This is the first issue of *Educational Technology Research and Development* (ETR&D), a new professional journal published by the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT). The fact that the new journal starts with volume number 37 is an indication of the journal's historical roots in other professional publications. ETR&D represents a consolidation of *Educational Communication and Technology Journal* (ECTJ) and the *Journal of Instructional Development* (JID). These journals, in turn, were preceded by *AV Communication Review.*

The decision to co-publish ECTJ and JID under a single cover and title was made in 1987 during the summer meeting of the AECT Executive Board in Wichita, Kansas. The Board reached its decision after a comprehensive study of AECT's publications by Tom Schwen, Chair of the AECT Publications Committee, and after discussions with the principal support groups of ECTJ and JID.

THE ROAD TO CO-PUBLICATION

Schwen began his study of five AECT publications after concerns were raised about the Association's publication program during the 1986 annual meeting in Las Vegas. His study included ECTJ, JID, *Tech Trends,* and two AECT division publications: *Media Management* and *School Learning Resources.*

Schwen collected data about the costs, the

circulation, and the publication procedures of each journal from the journal editors. He also obtained demographic information about the subscribers of each journal from staff in AECT's central office. Data for the five journals along with past issues of the journals were reviewed by a panel of ten AECT members selected from a list of individuals nominated by the journal editors. The review panel was asked to recommend whether the journals should be combined, eliminated, or continued under separate publication. The majority of the review panel recommended that ECTJ and JID be combined into one journal and that *Tech Trends, Media Management,* and *School Learning Resources* be combined into one journal.

Schwen next met with the editors of the five journals to develop recommendations for combined publication that could be presented to the division boards, the editorial boards, and the AECT Executive Board. The recommendations were presented during the 1987 annual meeting of the Association in Atlanta. The editorial boards of ECTJ and JID and the boards of the Research and Theory Division and the Division of Instructional Development all voted to retain separate publication of the two journals. The AECT Executive Board reviewed the panel recommendation, Schwen's recommendations for combining the journals, and recommendations from the editorial and division boards. As its final action on the matter, the Executive Board appointed an ad hoc committee to develop a plan for implementing the co-publication of ECTJ and JID that would have the support of their editorial boards and of the RTD and DID boards. Members of the ad hoc committee were Tom Schwen, Bill Winn, Norm Higgins, Barbara Hakes, and Don Smellie.

The ad hoc committee met in Denver to develop a plan for implementing the co-publication arrangement. The plan included a description of the physical aspects of the new publication, the numbering, the title, the contents, and the stipulation that the new journal would be distributed to all AECT members along with *Tech Trends*. The AECT Executive Board approved the plan with the exception of the stipulation that the new journal would be distributed to all members, which was not approved because of the dues increase that would have been required. The Executive Board charged the journal editors and the manager of AECT, Stan Zenor, with completing the publication of all issues of ECTJ and JID in 1988 and with initiating publication of the new journal in 1989.

The implementation plan was presented to the ECTJ and JID editorial boards during the 1988 annual meeting of AECT in New Orleans. The editorial boards approved the title of the new journal and its departments and layout. Howard Sullivan was appointed to replace Bill Winn, the ECTJ editor, beginning with the initial issue of ETR&D. Norman Higgins, the JID editor, continued on as the editor of the development section of ETR&D.

The decision to co-publish ECTJ and JID under a new title culminated a period of fiscal austerity for AECT. The consolidation of five Association publications into two journals and the assignment of journal publication to the Association's central office were part of a comprehensive effort of the AECT Executive Board to reduce publications costs, increase publications revenues, and regain control of a publication program that had grown away from the Association's central governing board.

ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION OF ECTJ AND JID

After the AECT Executive Board decided to co-publish ECTJ and JID under the new title, two studies of the journals' contents were completed. The first was a survey of AECT members' general perceptions of the journals (Schwen & Middendorf, 1987). The second involved a content analysis of the five latest volumes of ECTJ and JID (Dick & Dick, 1989).

Schwen and Middendorf (1987) surveyed a random sample of the entire AECT membership. They mailed questionnaires to 279 AECT members, a 7.5 percent sample of the total membership. The profile of the sample matched the profile of the AECT membership

with respect to the proportion of publication subscribers, division memberships, and places of employment. Thirty percent of the sample (84 members) returned the questionnaires.

The questionnaire was designed to elicit members' perceptions of ECTJ and JID and to determine their willingness to pay increased dues to receive both journals under a single title. The results of the survey indicated that AECT members have generally positive attitudes towards the two journals. ECTJ was perceived as being more important to the field than JID, while JID was perceived as having a more pleasing layout than ECTJ. Reasons given for not subscribing to either journal were the extra cost, the availability of the journals in libraries, and the irrelevancy of the content in the journals. Seventy percent of the sample indicated a desire to receive ECTJ and JID published under a single cover, and sixty percent indicated a willingness to pay additional dues to receive the journals combined under a single cover.

Dick and Dick (1989) analyzed the contents of five volumes of ECTJ (Volumes 30–34) and JID (Volumes 5–9). Their study, published in this issue of ETR&D, revealed that both journals publish several types of articles, but in different proportions. A high proportion of the articles published in ECTJ are either theoretical or empirical. JID, on the other hand, publishes a more diverse range of articles. These include literature reviews, descriptive studies, professional articles, empirical studies, and methodological articles in about equal proportions.

Dick and Dick also determined that very few of the first authors of articles in either journal had been first authors in both ECTJ and JID. They noted that the two journals apparently serve different professional communities. Most of the authors whose manuscripts were published in ECTJ are affiliated with colleges and universities. There is greater diversity in the affiliations of the authors who published in JID. More are affiliated with business, health services, military, and governmental agencies.

The two studies reviewed above were rooted in the history of ECTJ and JID. However, neither study considered members' preferences for the contents of ETR&D, the Association's new journal.

What Do AECT Members Want To Read?

Obviously, the content and types of articles in a journal are critical factors in determining its appeal and its readership. No recent data were available on the preferences of AECT members for the content of either ECTJ or JID. Therefore, the merger of the two journals provided an ideal occasion for a survey of the membership regarding preferences for ETR&D content. The survey was conducted by the ETR&D editors in October and November of 1988.

Survey Sample and Procedures. The initial sample for the survey was a 10 percent random sample of the AECT membership of approximately 4100, selected by taking every tenth name from the membership list. Deletion of institutional members reduced the mailing sample to 370. The survey questionnaire was mailed to this sample in mid-October, and all of the 161 fully completed questionnaires received by mid-November were included in the data analyses. An additional 37 questionnaires were not included because 16 of them were incomplete and 21 were received after the analyses were completed. The overall return rate was 54 percent (198 returned of 370 questionnaires mailed) and the effective rate for the analyses was 44 percent (161 analyzed of 370 mailed).

Analyses of several subgroups in the sample revealed that the percentage of respondents from these groups relative to the 161 respondents in the final sample reflected quite closely the percentage of subgroup members in the total AECT membership. Seventeen percent of AECT members belong to the Division of Instructional Development (DID), whereas 21 percent of respondents in the present sample were DID members. Corresponding figures for the Research and

Theory Division (RTD) and for postsecondary employees are 8 percent of AECT members and 7 percent of respondents in this survey for RTD, and 52 percent of AECT members and 54 percent of respondents for postsecondary employees.

The content for the questionnaire was derived from a survey completed by participants attending the 1988 AECT Summer Conference in Park City, Utah. Participants were asked to identify the topics and types of articles of greatest interest to them. The resulting lists, in alphabetical order rather than in frequency of mention, are presented below.

Topics

CD ROM and Data Bases in Education
Computer Applications in Education
Distance Learning and Telecommunications
Effective Instruction
Instructional Development
Interactive Video
Media Selection and Utilization

Types of Articles

Applied Research Studies
Case Studies of Educational Technology Uses
Literature Reviews of Educational Technology Uses
Literature Reviews of Research and Development
Theory-based Research Studies

These seven topics and five types of articles become the content base for the questionnaire.

The ETR&D editors designed the questionnaire in a paired-comparison form (Edwards, 1957) and in two parts. Part 1 covered the seven topics and Part 2 the five types of articles.

Paired-comparison methodology in preference surveys involves pairing each item with every other item of its type to determine a respondent's preferred item in each pair. From the list of seven topics, for example, Computer Applications in Education would be paired with each of the other six topics as separate pairs in the questionnaire. For each pair the respondent indicates a preference to read about either Computer Applications or the other topic in the pair.

The seven topics yielded 21 pairs of topics for Part 1 of the questionnaire and the five types of articles yielded 10 pairs for Part 2. The order of each item within a pair was systematically balanced so that each topic in Part 1 and each type of article in Part 2 appeared in first position and in second position an equal number of times. The order of the pairs in each part was randomly determined.

The one-sheet questionnaire included an explanation of its purpose, noting that the ETR&D editors would like to know the topics and types of articles of greatest interest to AECT members and were therefore surveying a sample of the membership. Respondents were instructed to select the topic (Part 1) and type of article (Part 2) in each pair that they would prefer to read about.

Preferences were determined by using Edward's (1957) model to calculate the percentage of times a topic was chosen when paired with each of the other topics. Preferences were calculated for all respondents and for the following subgroups of the AECT membership: ECTJ and/or JID subscribers, Research and Theory Division members, Division of Instructional Development members, and members employed in postsecondary educational settings (community colleges and universities).

Results. The results for the seven topics across all respondents are shown in Table 1. It can be seen that interactive video, which was selected as the preferred topic in 57 percent of all pairs, was the most preferred of the seven topics. Computer applications (53 percent), effective instruction (52 percent), and instructional development (51 percent) were also selected in more than half of their pairs. Selected with less than 50 percent frequency were media selection and utilization (48 percent), CD ROM and data bases in education (45 percent), and distance learning and telecommunications (44 percent).

The between-subjects consistency of

TABLE 1 □ AECT Member Preferences for Educational Technology Topics

TOPIC	*Interactive Video*	*Computer Applications*	*Effective Instruction*	*Instructional Development*	*Media Selection/ Utilization*	*CD ROM/ Data Bases*	*Distance Learning/ Telecommunications*
Interactive Video	—	48	55	45	39	38	35
Computer Applications	52	—	48	47	53	42	40
Effective Instruction	45	52	—	57	45	45	42
Instructional Development	55	53	43	—	50	43	49
Media Selection/ Utilization	61	47	55	50	—	48	51
CD ROM/ Data Bases	62	58	55	57	52	—	46
Distance Learning/ Telecommunications	65	60	58	51	49	54	—
OVERALL MEAN	57	53	52	51	48	45	44
RANK ORDER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Note: The cell entries show the percentage of respondents preferring the column topic over the row topic. For example, 52 in the Interactive Video column and the Computer Applications row (Column 1, Row 2) indicates that 52 percent of the respondents selected Interactive Video over Computer Applications. The overall mean of 57 for Interactive Video indicates that it was selected in 57 percent of all pairs in which it appeared.

paired-comparison ratings, a measure of interrater reliability, is indicated by the coefficient of agreement. Kendall's Test applied to the obtained coefficient yielded a χ^2 (df = 21) of 64.87, $p < .0001$, thus revealing that the agreement among respondents was highly significant.

Table 2 shows the overall percentage of times that each topic was chosen in the paired comparisons by all respondents and by each of several subgroups of AECT members. It can be seen that the responses in certain subgroups varied considerably from those of the total group. Interactive video ranked first among the total group and the postsecondary subgroup, but it ranked third among journal subscribers, RTD members, and DID members. Instructional development ranked first in each of these three groups, ranging from 8 to 18 percentage points higher than interactive video. These three groups, however, represented relatively small percentages of the total sample—22 percent for journal subscribers, 21 percent for DID members, and only 7 percent for RTD members.

The results for the five types of articles across all respondents are shown in Table 3. The table shows that case studies of educational technology uses was the most preferred type of article, selected in 70 percent of its pairings. Applied research studies ranked second and was selected in 67 percent of its pairs. Literature reviews of educational technology uses and literature reviews of research and development ranked third and fourth, with 50 percent and 40 percent, respectively. Theory-based research studies ranked last, being selected only 26 percent of the time.

Kendall's test of the obtained coefficient of agreement for types of articles revealed that the agreement among respondents was highly significant, χ^2 (df = 10) of 305.61, $p < .0001$.

The data for selected AECT subgroups are shown in Table 4. Case studies of educational technology uses ranked first among all respondents (70 percent) and among postsecondary employees (77 percent). Applied research studies ranked first among journal subscribers (65 percent) and DID members (69 percent). Case studies, R&D literature reviews, and theory-based research studies (52 percent each) tied for first among RTD members. Theory-based research studies were ranked last by three of the five groups, with a particularly low preference level (19 percent) among postsecondary employees.

Discussion. The answer to the question "What do AECT members want to read?" varies, depending on the particular members. When one considers all respondents to the survey, there are no very strong preferences across the seven topics. Interactive video, the most preferred topic, was favored in 57 percent of its comparisons, only 7 percent above the chance level. Distance learning/telecommunications, the least preferred, was selected in 44 percent of its comparisons, only 6 percent below chance. Overall, preferences are quite balanced across the topics.

The data on topics reveal considerably stronger preferences within subgroups than for all respondents. For example, DID members had a 75 percent preference rate for instructional development, and journal subscribers and RTD members had 67 and 64 percent rates. Conversely, each of these three groups had preference rates below 40 percent for two or more topics.

The differences in preferences between all respondents and certain subgroups raise the question "Whose preferences should be given the greatest weight in considering the journal content?" Should it be the general AECT membership, represented by all respondents, or the journal subscribers who, after all, are most likely its primary readers? The answer has practical significance. All respondents collectively ranked interactive video first, whereas journal subscribers ranked it third. Conversely, all respondents ranked instructional development fourth at 51 percent, whereas journal subscribers ranked it first at 67 percent. Among the least preferred topics, all respondents ranked media selection and utilization fifth with a 48 percent selection rate, whereas journal sub-

TABLE 2 □ Overall Preferences by Group for Educational Technology Topics

GROUP	*No. of Respondents*	*% of Respondents*	*Interactive Video*	*Computer Applications*	*Effective Instruction*	*Instructional Development*	*Media Selection/ Utilization*	*CD ROM/ Data Bases*	*Distance Learning/ Telecommunications*
All Respondents	161	100	57	53	52	51	48	45	44
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ECTJ &/or JID Subscribers	35	22	55	52	57	67	36	37	46
			3	4	2	1	7	6	5
Research & Theory Division Members	12	7	56	59	53	64	39	44	36
			3	2	4	1	6	5	7
Division of Instructional Development Members	34	21	57	54	64	75	28	38	35
			3	4	2	1	7	5	6
Postsecondary Employees	87	54	60	55	53	54	44	43	42
			1	2	4	3	5	6	7

Note: Row 1 for each group shows the overall percentage of times that each topic was selected. Row 2 for the group shows the rank order of the topic for that group.

TABLE 3 □ AECT Member Preferences for Types of Articles

TYPE OF ARTICLE	*Case Studies*	*Applied Research*	*Literature Review Educational Tech.*	*Literature Review Research & Dev.*	*Theory Research*
Case Studies of Educational Tech. Uses	—	40	28	27	24
Applied Research Studies	60	—	39	28	14
Literature Reviews of Educational Tech. Uses	72	61	—	34	35
Literature Reviews of Research & Dev.	73	72	66	—	29
Theory-based Research Studies	76	86	65	71	—
OVERALL MEAN	70	67	50	40	26
RANK ORDER	1	2	3	4	5

TABLE 4 □ Overall Preferences by Group for Types of Articles

GROUP	*No. of Respondents*	*% of Respondents*	*Case Studies*	*Applied Research*	*Literature Review Educational Tech.*	*Literature Review Research & Dev.*	*Theory Research*
All Respondents	161	100	70	67	50	40	26
			1	2	3	4	5
ECTJ &/or JID Subscribers	35	22	61	65	38	49	37
			2	1	4	3	5
Research & Theory Division Members	12	7	52	50	44	52	52
			1	4	5	1	1
Division of Instructional Development Members	34	21	55	69	34	54	38
			2	1	5	3	4
Postsecondary Employees	87	54	77	64	52	38	19
			1	2	3	4	5

Note: The three entries of "1" in the rank order row for RTD indicate a three-way tie for first in this group.

scribers ranked it last at only 36 percent. The differences between all respondents and journal subscribers of 16 percent for instructional development and 12 percent for media selection and utilization are rather substantial.

Differences across all respondents were much greater for types of articles than for topics. Here, respondents showed quite strong preferences for case studies of educational technology uses (70 percent) and for applied research studies (67 percent). In contrast, theory-based research studies had a preference rate of only 26 percent, far less than half of the rate for each of the two top-ranked types.

With the exception of RTD members, the four subgroups agreed rather closely with all respondents with regard to their rank order of preference for types of articles. The three subgroups other than RTD members ranked case studies and applied research either as 1–2 or 2–1 for most preferred, thus agreeing with all respondents on the top two choices. Journal subscribers and postsecondary employees agreed with all respondents in ranking theory-based research studies last, and DID members ranked them fourth. RTD members, the smallest subgroup, did not show a strong preference for any type of article and had a considerably different pattern of preferences from the other groups.

What Is the Recent Journal Content?

Tables 1–4 provide data on the preferences of AECT members for the topics and types of articles for ETR&D. Has the recent content of ECTJ and JID been consistent with these preferences? To investigate this question, the ETR&D editors conducted an analysis of the four 1986 and four 1987 issues of both journals and the first two issues of 1988. The analysis differed from that of Dick and Dick (1989) in that our analysis involved different journal volumes and a different typology of articles and also dealt with the topic of each article, as well as the type.

Procedures. The same seven topics used in the AECT membership survey were used as the basis for classifying the articles by topic. The five types of articles, which differed somewhat from the five types in the membership survey, were as follows: case studies, descriptions, experimental research, literature reviews, and survey research. Definitions for each topic and type of article were developed and agreed upon by the four individuals who were to classify the articles. The category of descriptions included descriptions of projects, experiences, methods and models as well as "thought pieces." Experimental research included true experimental and quasi-experimental studies as defined by Campbell and Stanley (1963).

A general correspondence exists between the five types of articles in the AECT survey and the five in the analysis of the journals. The case studies category in the AECT survey would include case studies and many of the descriptions from the journal analysis. The two types of literature reviews (educational technology uses and research and development) from the AECT survey would both fall into the one literature review category in the journal analysis. Finally, applied research studies and theory-based research studies from the AECT survey would be included in the experimental research and survey research categories in the journal analysis, although the individual research categories from the survey do not have identical individual counterparts in the categories for the journal analysis.

The two senior authors, who are faculty members at Arizona State University, and the junior authors, who are advanced doctoral students, initially classified each ECTJ and JID article independently. Each of these four individuals classified each article once by its major topic and once by the type of article it was judged to be. The four judges then met to resolve any differences in their classifications of each article and to arrive at final classifications. For the relatively few articles where their initial classifications did not agree, they achieved consensus either by ac-

cepting the most frequent classification or by accepting the most convincing argument for a particular classification.

Results. Table 5 shows the number and percentage of total occurrences for each topic and each type of article by journal. For ECTJ, media selection and utilization was the most frequent major topic, being the main topic in 35 percent of the articles. Effective instruction and instructional development followed at 22 and 20 percent. Experimental research was the most common type of article, with 65 percent of all ECTJ articles in this category. For JID, instructional development was the major topic in 72 percent of the articles. Descriptions accounted for 64 percent of the types of articles.

The combined results for topics in ECTJ and JID show that instructional development was the major topic in 44 percent of the articles in the two journals, media selection and utilization in 17 percent, and effective instruction in 16 percent. Interactive video and computer applications, the two most preferred topics in the AECT member survey, accounted for seven and 13 percent respectively. CD ROM and data bases (one percent) and distance learning and telecommunications (two percent) combined were the major topics in only three of the 90 articles.

The combined results across both journals for types of articles reveal that descriptions were the most frequent type at 42 percent and experimental research the second most frequent at 32 percent. Literature reviews ranked third at 16 percent. The high total ranking for descriptions was due to their high frequency in JID, and the high total ranking for experimental research resulted from its frequency in ECTJ.

Discussion. Much of the interest in the count of topics and types of articles concerns the relationships between what subscribers and potential readers prefer and what they actually get. The most preferred topic among subscribers, instructional development, also was the most frequent major topic in the journals, at 44 percent across both journals and a dominant 72 percent in JID alone. However, instructional development ranked only fourth among all respondents to the survey. Thus, its high frequency of appearance in the journals is more consistent with the preferences of the journal subscribers than with those of non-subscribers.

The frequency in the journals for the com-

TABLE 5 □ Number and Percentage of Topics and Types of Articles by Journal

	ECTJ		JID		*Total*	
TOPIC/TYPE OF ARTICLE	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%
Interactive Video	3	7.5	3	6	6	7
Computer Applications	8	20.0	4	8	12	13
Effective Instruction	9	22.5	5	10	14	16
Instructional Development	4	10.0	36	72	40	44
Media Selection/Utilization	14	35.0	1	2	15	17
CD ROM/Data Bases	1	2.5	0	0	1	1
Distance Learning/Telecom.	1	2.5	1	2	2	2
Case Studies	1	2.5	4	8	5	6
Descriptions	6	15.0	32	64	38	42
Experimental Research	26	65.0	3	6	29	32
Literature Reviews	5	12.5	9	18	14	16
Survey Research	2	5.0	2	4	4	4

Note: Data are based on 40 articles in 10 issues of ECTJ from Volumes *34*(1) through *36*(2) and 50 articles in corresponding 10 issues of JID from Volumes *9*(1) through *11*(2).

puter areas of interactive video and computer applications was low relative to overall respondent preferences. These topics ranked first and second among all respondents and third and fourth among journal subscribers. Yet interactive video accounted for only 7 percent of the journal articles and computer applications for 13 percent. It seems likely that the large number of journals devoted to computers per se may be responsible for the relatively low frequency of these topics in the AECT scholarly journals. Still, a somewhat higher frequency of articles on these topics would appear to broaden the appeal of the journals to the general AECT membership without lowering the appeal to subscribers.

CD ROM/data bases and distance learning/telecommunications together were the major topics in only three percent of all articles and also ranked low in preference among both subscribers and all respondents. Their preference levels suggest that articles on each are occasionally appropriate, but do not appear to warrant a strong effort to greatly increase the frequency of either topic in the journals.

The correspondence between respondent preferences for types of articles and frequency of the types in the journals is more difficult to interpret than the correspondence for topics because of a variation in types of articles between the survey and the article count. Case studies of educational technology uses was the most preferred type of article among all respondents in the survey and the second most among subscribers. The case studies category accounted for only 6 percent of the articles in ECTJ and JID. However, there was no descriptions category in the preference survey, and descriptions accounted for 42 percent of the articles in the two journals. If identical categories had been used to classify the articles as were used in the survey, many of the descriptions would have been classified most appropriately as case studies.

Applied research was the most preferred topic among journal subscribers in the survey and second most preferred for all respondents, while theory-based research ranked last for both groups. Research was strongly represented in the journals with 36 percent of all articles, 32 percent from experimental research and 4 percent from survey research. The 16 percent representation for literature reviews in the journals appears reasonably consistent with member preferences. The two types of literature reviews in the survey were ranked third and fourth both by all respondents and by journal subscribers.

Our results, like those of Dick and Dick (1989), reveal distinct differences in content between ECTJ and JID. ECTJ was primarily a research journal. Seventy percent of its articles during the period covered by our analysis were either experimental research or survey research articles. Each of three different topics—media selection and utilization, effective instruction, and computer applications—was the primary topic in 20 percent or more of its total articles. JID, as its title indicates, was an instructional development journal. Seventy-two percent of its articles dealt with instructional development. Most of its articles were descriptive, not research, in nature.

EDITORS' PERSPECTIVES

The data from the recent studies of ECTJ, JID, and AECT member preferences for ETR&D make it clear that the potential readership for the new journal has a wide range of potential interests. Satisfying these interests will be an important part of the editors' role. Further, not only should ETR&D appeal to its constituency, it should also represent the scholarship of AECT well to its own association and to other associations and individuals involved in educational applications of technology.

Maintaining both a high level of scholarship and a relatively broad appeal to potential readers will be a significant challenge. Less than 25 percent of AECT members subscribed to ECTJ and/or JID in 1988. A large percentage of members are applied practitioners working in a variety of fields. *Tech Trends* is responsive to a fair degree to the interests of

this constituency. Still, a broader appeal and readership is desirable for ETR&D as well. A delicate balance will be required to maintain a selection of topics and level of scholarship that have this appeal.

The AECT member preference survey and the analysis of ECTJ and JID content have some implications for the balance of articles in ETR&D. The high ranking of computer-related content, represented by interactive video and computer applications, relative to its frequency in the journals suggests that an increase in these topics would be responsive to the preferences of the general membership and not inconsistent with those of the journal subscribers. The data also suggest that a modest increase in scholarly articles on distance learning and on data bases, two areas that have been generally ignored in the journals, would be appropriate. A type of article well suited to address such topics for practitioners is a literature review or report on state-of-the-art practice or on relevant research and its implications for practice.

The member preference survey also provides information relevant to the focus of the scholarship in ETR&D. What should be the balance of theoretical and applied content? Both the general AECT membership and the journal subscribers showed a strong preference for applied over theoretical research. We agree that the implications for practice should be clear for articles published in ETR&D. Authors of theory-based research articles should make explicit the practical applications of the research. Conversely, an author who submits a manuscript describing a well-designed applied study with clear practical implications should not feel compelled to provide a theoretical base for the study, especially if it was designed without such a base in mind.

The authors of several articles in this initial issue of ETR&D cite the importance of a close link between research and practice in educational technology. ETR&D provides a convenient forum for linking research, development, and general state-of-the-art practice in the field. To the extent that the linkage does not occur naturally through publication of unsolicited manuscripts, the editors will supplement it by soliciting manuscripts that link research and practice in areas of interest to ETR&D readers.

The editors are committed to the goals of maintaining a high level of scholarship for ETR&D and of broadening its appeal within AECT. Hopefully, these two goals are compatible. Continuing scholarship plus a broader base of readers and subscribers should enable ETR&D to achieve greater potential and to extend its influence as AECT's scholarly journal. □

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