

## *Methodology*

Finding reliable and valid sources of information on staff development was a challenge for the researcher. The researcher used electronic databases using keyword-searching methods to locate traditional and online sources on the topic. The primary database used to locate sources was ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center). The ERIC database was useful in locating full-text articles from well-known research journals and publications. ERIC is a database that focuses on retrieving sources related to education. The researcher was most successful in finding pertinent information when using the following descriptors: adult learners, distance education, technology use, and staff development. Another database used to locate sources was the University of Northern Iowa's Rod Library Catalog, known as UNISTAR. The researcher used UNISTAR primarily to locate traditional sources such as books and some research articles. The third source of locating traditional sources was the faculty within the Educational Technology Division at the University of Northern Iowa. The researcher was able to review books from respected researchers in the fields of staff development, distance education, and instructional technology. The final source of locating information was the use of World Wide Web search engines. The researcher was able to locate full-text research articles from online journals using search engines.

The challenge of citing resources from the World Wide Web is that the researcher had to check for the credibility of the information found. This was an important issue because the researcher recognizes that anyone can publish information online that is false or misleading. To check for credibility, the researcher found background information on the authors of the online sources and determined if the information was credible. To

determine further credibility, the researcher entered the authors' names into the ERIC database and found that many of the authors have several publications in the fields of staff development, distance education, and/or instructional technology.

The primary rationale for selecting the sources described above was reliability. The researcher recognized that he had access to human and electronic resources that would make locating sources of information fairly easy. However, it was the researcher's responsibility to determine the credibility and the validity of the information to be referenced in this literature review. The second rationale for selecting the above sources is the researcher's own interest in the topic of staff development and use of technology. The researcher intends to use this literature review as a foundation for future research in staff development in the area of technology integration.

The researcher developed a list of criteria for evaluating the information cited throughout this review.

1. Is this the actual writer/author of the information? (Credibility)
2. Is the information verifiable and authentic? (Validity)
3. Has the information been used in other research?
4. Is the information based on previous research?
5. Does the information cite well-known researchers on the given topic?

Is the information presented in a clear and organized manner?