Distributed Learning

Within the context of online pedagogic communities, the term "distributed learning" is best described as an educational experience that is conducted across a variety of geographic environments with the aid of various synchronous and asynchronous interactive media tools (Dede, 2004). As effective facilitators of knowledge, having the necessary technical skills for use within this new "virtual" online paradigm is paramount in maintaining valued intellectual presence within the online global community. The use of multi-user virtual environments provides educators and learners with an opportunity to create a form of augmented reality (AR) that builds upon the idea of a ubiquitous computing model, which blends the physical and virtual worlds together. This virtual "construct" allows students and facilitators the ability to share information and learning experiences with their peers from around the globe in a more interactive way (Kaufmann, n.d.).

The technical aptitude to collaborate within a shared virtual space opens the door towards a more natural form of communication between participants. For many individuals, AR is viewed as an immersive synchronous experience that can help to supplement traditional methods of asynchronous communications. This virtual approach can definitely be a valued benefit within my own locus of control. As a vested stakeholder for a corporation with regional offices across the country and around the globe, the advantages and uses of AR is astounding. Within my own IT group, having the ability to work on network systems related projects within a 3D environment can be highly effective in bringing to life concepts and ideas that would otherwise be lacking through the use of basic 2D tools.

For example, a technician can be sent to a remote site with an iPhone utilizing AR features that can capture the floor plan of an existing office space. This information can then be plotted and uploaded into our system where a group of analysts are able to walk through the rendered "virtual" space where the proposed computer network will be installed. This would provide my team with accurate measurements for use in creating an appropriate network topology for the office space. Being able to work with team members across the country on a complex project that is not restricted to dated two-dimensional ORG charts is a major benefit in terms of time and

cost. This interactive method of sharing and compiling information is just a glimpse of how technology will continue to improve the way collaborative projects are conducted in the 21st century.