



A Monthly Newsletter from ADEA Executive Director Richard W. Valachovic, D.M.D., M.P.H.

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In this month's letter, Dr. Richard Valachovic, Executive Director of the American Dental Education Association, reports on the launch of a major online ADEA project to help ADEA members manage and benefit from the knowledge explosion in our profession.



Harnessing the Power of the Knowledge Explosion

As health care providers and educators, our lives have been dramatically altered by the Internet. We are expected to find, know about, access, and process an overload of information. And we rely on the Internet to keep us up to date and build on the content that the Internet is capable of processing in nanoseconds. We expect intelligence from the Internet. We expect important things to happen on the Internet. We also expect to find community on the Internet, and if we can't find what we're looking for, we'll start our own!

Well, something intelligent and important happened on the Internet this week: the debut of ADEA's Communities of Interest. Enter through the [Member Portal on the ADEA Web site](#) and you will find The ADEA Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Community of Interest, with five interactive neighborhoods, each crafted to connect you with knowledge you need and with other ADEA members who share your concerns.

This first installment of our new virtual communities targets faculty members and includes Best Practices, Career Development for New Educators, Mentoring, Portfolio Development, and Research Opportunities. Each of these neighborhoods has chatrooms, news, resources, collaboration opportunities, links, frequently asked questions, a photo album, an events calendar, and a poll. Trust me, this is not your familiar message board. This is more like an online interactive faculty theme park. Or maybe an online interactive academic swap meet. Or add coffee and imagine an online interactive faculty Starbucks.

Take a look at the Career Development for New Educators neighborhood. We know that interest in this subject is high - in fact, more than a thousand ADEA members belong to this ADEA Special Interest Group. As the pace of faculty retirements quickens, many of you are coming in from private practice to find students who do not remind you of the way you were at their age and stage. These students cut their teeth on technology. They may answer email and play electronic games in class, but they may also go off, scour the Internet, come back, and suggest where your lecture went astray. They are active learners, not receptacles for your accrued wisdom, and they challenge us to learn new ways of teaching and mentoring.

Try clicking on "Easy-to-Incorporate Active Learning Strategies," one of the hand-picked resources of the Career Development for New Educators neighborhood. Dr. Judith Skelton and Dr. Karen West of the University of Kentucky recommend that you change your approach from "sage on the stage to guide on the side," and in this PowerPoint presentation they suggest dozens of ways for you to make this transition in your classroom.

What a timesaver not to have to do your own search for this kind of helpful resource! The sifting and the evaluation have been done for you. At the same time, you can contribute to your communities at every turn - by participating, sharing what works and what doesn't at your school, creating new topics, submitting new resources and materials, and even suggesting new

communities. To keep it all running productively, each community has volunteer facilitators who will poll community members, make sure that content is up to date and your questions get answered, and plan virtual or face-to-face community events.

The ADEA Communities of Interest are produced under the direction of ADEA's [Sue Sandmeyer](#), Associate Executive Director for Knowledge Management. We created the ADEA Division of Knowledge Management last year to help you benefit from the explosion of knowledge in our field - not be overwhelmed by it. In our "mind's eye," we saw members connecting and sharing and learning around issues of mutual concern via the Internet, and now that concept has become a reality.

In a quick trip around the ADEA Communities of Interest, I noticed that Best Practices was polling members on ways that dental education will have to change in the next 20 years - with responses ranging from "no change is necessary" all the way to "a new profession" must be defined. The Research Opportunities neighborhood has posted an article by Charles Bertolami on *The Role and Importance of Research and Scholarship in Dental Education and Practice*, as well as a link to the NIDCR newsletter. The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning neighborhood linked to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and a perspective, "A Different Way to Think About Teaching and Learning."

So, come through the [ADEA Member Portal](#) to the ADEA Communities of Interest. Take a look around, sample some of the offerings, let us know how it works for you. And look for more ADEA Communities of Interest - of special relevance to students, the allied dental community, and sections - coming in the fall.



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