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der Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg

**Volume 11**

Börje Holmberg

**The Evolution, Principles  
and Practices  
of Distance Education**



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## Series Editors' Foreword

In 1953, Börje Holmberg stepped into the world of distance education as an author of an English language course for Hermods in Sweden. In 1956 he became the educational director of Hermods, and from 1966 to 1975 director general of the Hermods Foundation. Hermods was then the largest correspondence school in Europe, enrolling up to 100,000 students annually.

After more than 20 years of comprehensive experiences in the correspondence mode of distance education Börje Holmberg became a professor of distance education methodology and director of the Institute for Distance-Education Research (ZIFF) at the FernUniversität in Hagen/Germany.

During his period at the FernUniversität from 1975 to 1990 university-level distance education across the world flourished. Börje Holmberg was in the very centre of this development. He became a distinguished researcher on the theory and practice of distance education and published several books and made many contributions to learned journals. Among these are the seminal: "Growth and Structure of Distance Education" (1986), "Mediated Communication as a Component of Distance Education" (1989), "Theory and Practice of Distance Education" (1990, 1995/ 2<sup>nd</sup>) as well as numerous research articles and reports.

As Professor emeritus Börje Holmberg took up the challenges of the electronic age in distance education. With full engagement he became in 1995 the founding rector of a private distance-teaching university in Germany (FernFachhochschule Darmstadt). At the same time he took part in the development and teaching of the *Virtual Seminar for Professional Development in Distance Education*, which later has been transformed into the *Foundations of Distance Education* course and became the entry course of the online *Master of Distance Education (MDE)* program offered since 2000 in partnership by the University of Maryland University College and Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg. Since the launch of the program over 700 students have had the unique privilege to interact personally with Börje Holmberg as their tutor in the online learning environment of the first module of the course, the subject of which is *History and Principles of Distance Education*.

Together with Otto Peters, Börje Holmberg received in 1999 the Prize of Excellence for life-long contributions in the field of distance education from the International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE). Börje Holmberg's great merit is his knowledge about the roots, the principles, the practices and the evolution of distance education. According to the *American Journal of Distance Education* (18(4), pp. 225 – 241) Börje Holmberg's works in general and his *Theory and Practice of Distance Education* in particular, were in the years 1997 to 2002 amongst the most cited sources in four prominent distance learning journals.

Börje Holmberg's latest work, *The Evolution, Principles and Practices of Distance Education* provides a unique and eloquent expression of a successful progress of the theory and practice of distance education. The book amalgamates parts of his *Growth and Structure in Distance Education* (1986), his *Theory and Practice in Distance Education* (1989, 1995/2<sup>nd</sup>) and his *Distance Education in Essence* (2001, 2003/2<sup>nd</sup>).

The editors of the ASF Series are excited about Börje Holmberg's continued scholarly efforts on behalf of his MDE students as well as his continued contribution to the distance education community, and happily include *The Evolution, Principles and Practices of Distance Education* as volume 11 of the ASF Series, which replaces volume 4 - his *Distance Education in Essence*.

Franziska Vondrlik's tremendous contributions as the editorial assistant made this publication possible.

The Editors  
March 2005

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