



“... the real world is where theory and practice come together and science becomes relevant, making sense that leads to understanding.” (p. 283)

Nix, R.K. (2002). *Virtual field trips: Using information technology to create an integrated science learning environment*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, Curtin University of Technology, Perth, Western Australia.

May 7, 2007

When the shoulders of the ‘giants’ on which you stand average 4’ tall, you either need a lot of them or they have to let you stand there a long while. Receiving the *Excellence in Distance Learning Teaching Award* is proof that I simply seized the many ‘golden’ opportunities afforded me to do both!

Carla Nix, Ann Irizarry, Susan Morrice, Cynthia Ledbetter, Scherry Johnson, and Darcy Hardy have picked me up and lifted me up more times than I could ever recount. Another ‘short’ list includes others who I do indeed look up to: Carl Nix, John Nix, Mary Meyer, Debbie Gray, Fred Fifer, and Barry Fraser ~ for example.

Physical stature aside, you my friend(s), have influenced my life in special ways that led to this acknowledgement by the United States Distance Learning Association, so I want to share it – *and all that it represents* – with you, professionally and personally.

Thanks for sharing a part of your unique self with me,



*As John Muir simply noted:*

“When we try to pick out anything by itself we find it hitches to everything in the universe.”

This award is the culmination of many ideas that I was enabled to put into action. My dad, Joe Nix, has encouraged and supported this end throughout my life. He gave me the tools and uncovered the talents that I needed ‘*to write the book that I wanted to read.*’ I first built an *ISLE* with my doctorate that was based on work for a national Teacher Outreach grant. Next, I added a virtual *MT SCIENCE* with a state technology grant. Finally, I realized the potential by helping take UT-Dallas students *To The Top* thanks to federal Teacher Quality grants. The many ‘lessons learned’ are shared worldwide now through the UT-TeleCampus *MAT-SE Online*.