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Newsletter of the Online Teaching Committee  
Department of Languages and Literature

L and L on line

### From the Editor

This year the OTC and the newsletter offer the department several exciting projects. The OTC has begun revising your positive responses to last year’s policy questions (which we circulated to you in “Questionnaire Regarding Department’s Online Instruction Policy”) into a list of policy statements. I will then present the list to Robbie Teahen (Vice President of Academic Affairs), and Nate will do the same to Reinhold (representing our college), looking for possible conflicts between these tentative policies and those of our university and college. After that, we will submit the list to the department for discussion.

Next, I hope you’ve seen posters and received the email notification about Let’s Get It Together, the OTC’s initiative for getting as many of us as possible to go through the Online Instructor Certification process together. We’ve already pointed out some of the perks of attending the workshops, but here are three more: First, to participate, you don’t have to have completed your FerrisConnect training: you can GET your training through Let’s Get It Together! Second, if your H1 N1 Swine Flu Instructional Contingency Plan (FICP) involves your using online instruction modules that you would like to learn more about, these workshops can help you. Third, if the workshop schedule makes it difficult to attend all—or even any—of the workshops, you may still be part of the cadre of participants: just get one or two participant partners who ARE attending and learn what you missed from those partners at a mutually convenient time.

In addition to working on the policy and workshop projects, the OTC has also been busy scouting for fresh ideas for the newsletter. In this edition, you’ll read an article by Charles Bacon, from Physical Sciences, who thoroughly disproves his tongue-in-cheek title, “You Can’t Do Laboratory Science Online!” What a superb inauguration of our guest columnist series! And to keep us apprised of technical developments, Mary Holmes, E-Learning Systems Administrator, begins writing her regular column, “FerrisConnect Technical Corner.” Thanks, Mary!

Many thanks to Rebecca Sammel for her Forum article, “The Good, the Bad and the Ugly Optimistic,” which continues a sequence of articles from last year, the first of which she also wrote: “The Trails and Tribulations of Technology-Users at Ferris,” “Seven Technology Experts Meet with L&L Faculty to Discuss FerrisConnect Problems,” and “Minutes of the FerrisConnect Meeting Between L&L faculty and Tech Staff.”

In this first edition of the academic year are two feature articles: Betty Stolarek’s “A Convert? Well...Getting There” and Doug Haneline’s “Travel Notes on the Journey to Multi-Media Happiness in Teaching.” As the titles imply, they’re both about transiting from traditional to online teaching; and as you well know, these are wonderful writers, so just sit back, read, and enjoy the ride!

~Elaine

### More National Exposure for Lang and Lit and the OTC Newsletter

“Faculty Initiative in Creating an e-Learning Newsletter” will be presented at the Fifteenth Sloan-C International Conference on Online Learning, held this year in Orlando, Florida, from October 28-30. With much urging and help from Kimn Carlton-Smith, Elaine submitted the following brief proposal, which was eventually accepted:

*This presentation will address the origins and purposes of the Department of Languages and Literature’s e-learning newsletter. Using four of the newsletters as examples, the moderator will discuss how the newsletter was conceived and then illustrate how it addresses online pedagogical principles that are field-specific, serves as a collector of University-wide online information as it relates to the department, offers a forum for faculty to express their opinions on a variety of online issues, engenders awareness of the work being done by those teaching online in the department, endeavors to attract other faculty to pursue teaching fully online courses, and creates a professional learning community with a stake in the success of online learning at the University.*

Well-known and respected in the field of online learning, the Sloan-C Conference is sponsored by Sloan-C, “a consortium of individuals, institutions, and organizations committed to quality in online education.”

Last spring, Lang and Lit and the OTC newsletter gained national exposure when Robbie Teahen, Associate VP for Academic Affairs, distributed our third newsletter at a mid-April Higher Learning Commission Conference; in two peer-review sessions attended by over 500 participants from 19 states, she used it as an example of what HLC teams should look for in terms of good university practices.

### In This Edition....

From the Editor.....	1
More National Exposure for Lang and Lit and the OTC Newsletter.....	1
A Convert? Well...Getting There.....	2
Online Class Size Committee Meets.....	2
Did You Miss the Faculty Week Workshop?.....	3
About the OTC.....	3
About the OTC Newsletter.....	3
OTC Loses Key Member.....	3
Forum: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly Optimistic.....	4
A Brief Bibliography of Online Resources.....	4
Let’s Get It Together.....	5
You Can’t Do Laboratory Science Online!.....	6-7
CPTS Effort to Increase Student Retention.....	7
FerrisConnect Technical Corner.....	7
1 Travel Notes on the Journey to Multi-Media Happiness in Teaching.....	8



# A Convert? Well...Getting There

~Betty Stolarek



First the disclaimer: I am an unlikely candidate to be writing an article for this newsletter. I've resisted teaching online, and consented to teach mixed delivery classes only upon the realization that my options for variety in the courses I teach were becoming limited—unless I included internet teaching in my repertoire. And I still have reservations. I'm not yet convinced that online courses can compete with onsite courses in terms of quality of instruction. I worry about security issues that arise when a course goes online. Perhaps most importantly, the face-to-face interaction I have with my students has always been the most enjoyable part of my profession.

But internet teaching has improved over the past few years; advances in technology have smoothed out some of the rough spots and have provided, in some cases, advantages over onsite teaching. There—I've said something I never thought I would say. Let me elaborate.

First, FerrisConnect is much better than WebCT. I was able to learn the rudiments of the FerrisConnect system in less than a quarter of the time it took me to attain the level of incompetence I achieved during a semester of using WebCT. With FerrisConnect, the days of needing seven clicks to download and print one paper are over. This improvement has convinced me to web-enhance all of my onsite courses this semester: students will no longer be able to hope that losing a syllabus or an assignment handout is an excuse for not completing work. It will all be online.

Second, mailing individual students or a whole class is much easier on FerrisConnect than through class lists. No more cutting and pasting addresses—a distinct advantage for a person who was very late in learning the intricacies of right-clicking. Within the same context, administering essay exams over the internet makes a great deal of sense. The first time I actually considered looking into online teaching was while driving to Flint in a blizzard to give a two-hour essay exam. I realized that all my students were driving in the same blizzard—all of us risking our lives for the

opportunity to sit together in a computer lab, completing a task that could easily have been done in the comfort and safety of our own homes.

One way in which internet instruction is actually *more* effective than onsite instruction is in discussion. Often time does not permit involving every student in discussion, and there are always a few students who resist responding until the third or fourth week of the semester, or even beyond. But internet discussion boards change all that. I find my students post voluminously on discussion boards, beginning with the first day of class. Because of this, I can get to know my students better, and sooner, when I teach online.

New and exciting technology has made internet teaching much easier. With Tegrity, instructors can record lectures and verbal instructions much more easily than before. Grading short, uncomplicated student papers with the track changes option on Word makes grading a faster, simpler, and paper-less project. And for longer papers or papers that require sophisticated formatting, like résumés and formal reports, new copiers can email copies of graded student papers in little more time than it takes to make photocopies. I view this feature with pretty much the same awe and amazement with which I viewed the first moon walk forty years ago.

Finally, of course, there's the opportunity to teach in one's pajamas—a joke, I first thought, but actually a pretty significant advantage.

None of this will sound remarkable to my colleagues who have embraced internet teaching from the start, but they are not my audience. I am writing this for my fellow troglodytes, those of you who have avoided incorporating the internet into your classes. My suggestion is to give it a try, if only by posting your onsite classes on FerrisConnect. You may find, as I have, that the internet can enhance teaching in ways you may not have imagined. Ω

## Online Class Size Committee Meets

On August 28, the Online Class Size Committee met for the second time. The chair is Van Egerton; the members are Sandra Burns, Tom Oldfield, Kimn Carlton-Smith, Jody Ollenquist, Don Flickinger, Elaine McCullough, Teresa Raglin, Kay Anderson, Gregory Wellman, and John Quiltzch. So far, the members have been gathering and reading research, and Van has asked members to prioritize their goals by the next meeting, on September 24, 3:30-5:00 pm. Jody and Elaine will keep you apprised of further developments.

# Did You Miss the Faculty Week Workshop?

~Jody Ollenquist

"Responding to Student Writing Online," held on August 26, 2009, was facilitated by Roxanne Cullen, Elaine McCullough, and Jody Ollenquist. Sixteen faculty members attended: Lilia Caserta, Lynn Chrenka, Carol Corbett, Debbie Courtright-Nash, Dan Ding, Bernadette Fox, Steve Fox, Nell Hill, Courtney Patrick, Linda Sherwood, Chris Vonder Haar, Robert von der Osten, Christine Persak, Sharon Robideaux, Rebecca Sammel, and Kathy Wykes.

We discussed a variety of ways to respond to student work electronically—including scanning hand-graded work into

PDF files and using MS Word review functions such as comment, track changes, and highlighter.

We also covered using onscreen scoring sheets and rubrics, both within and outside FerrisConnect, and shared rubric samples/templates as well as links to rubric creation websites.

In addition to the two Let's Get It Together certification workshops, we're planning one more workshop for the fall semester – topic and date TBA. If you want to suggest workshop topics or would like to facilitate a workshop, contact Jody Ollenquist at [ollenqui@ferris.edu](mailto:ollenqui@ferris.edu) or x2915.

## About the OTC

**The 2009-10 members of the Online Teaching Committee and their terms of service are Lynn Chrenka, Scribe (2 years); Elaine McCullough, Chair (2 years); Jody Ollenquist, Workshop Coordinator (3 years); Dan Noren, Protocol (1 year); Tenure-Track Member to Be Elected (1 year); and Non-Tenure-Track Member to Be Elected (1 year).**

**The mission of the Online Teaching Committee is to promote and facilitate online teaching within the Department of Languages and Literature, act as a resource for best practices, support the use of online technology in the classroom, develop policy guidelines for offering courses online, and represent the department's online interests to other university bodies.**

**We hold open meetings at 11:00 am on the second Tuesday of the month in ASC 2082, publish a newsletter three times a semester, and deliver workshops related to online instruction.**

## About the OTC Newsletter

*L and L on Line* is published three times a semester by the Online Teaching Committee of the Department of Languages and Literature, Ferris State University. Its purpose is to keep members of the Department apprised of issues affecting our online teaching. Your contributions and suggestions are welcome. The editor is Elaine McCullough, ASC 3077, x5875, [mcculloe@ferris.edu](mailto:mcculloe@ferris.edu).

## OTC Loses Key Member

*We were saddened by the resignation from the committee by Katherine Harris, who has other concerns that demand her attention at this time. We will sorely miss her vibrant participation and first-rate contributions.*

*Nate will soon be organizing a request for nominations to fill the position Katherine has vacated.*



# FORUM

## The Good, the Bad and the ~~Ugly~~ Optimistic: What's New Since our Meeting with Tech Staff

~Rebecca Sammel

I was going to name this article after my favorite western, but it's mostly good news when it comes to our talented and hard-working Tech Staff here at FSU. So I've replaced "Ugly" with "Optimistic."

Back in early March 2009, six members of the Languages & Literature faculty met with seven members of the Tech Staff to discuss FerrisConnect issues. The Tech Staff were wonderfully informative and helpful, and graciously answered all of our questions as best they could. The following summaries resulted from that meeting.

### The Good:

- ✓ We now have the change-of-password prompt for which we clamored. The textbox "MyFSU Password Status," located in the top center of the MyFSU screen, states the date our password will expire and provides a link for changing our password.
- ✓ The faculty present at the March meeting were able to describe to the Tech Staff their user experiences when FerrisConnect presents difficulties, and the tech staff provided advice and explanations for a range of problems and situations.
- ✓ We got a valuable glimpse of the obstacles the Tech Staff face as they try to do their jobs: they explained that unless we can recreate the exact situation, such as what keystrokes we hit and what windows were open, it's difficult for them to resolve the problem. And most of us—distracted and rushing to finish—rarely recall all details of the situation when a problem occurred.
- ✓ I had turned off the Java Applet back in fall 2008, when Jody Ollenquist explained to me why it would help. Yet I found that even after I had turned off the Applet in the classroom labs, problems continued to occur there, and the computers would freeze. It was gratifying to learn the reason, which is, as Mary Holmes explained, that Vista has an inherent problem that sometimes occupies 100% of the CPU (central processing unit), thereby paralyzing the servers. This problem has now been fixed with a patch. As Mary says, "We have plenty of FerrisConnect capacity, more than we need."
- ✓ Thank you, Tech Staff, for all these helpful improvements. We are grateful for your efforts and your talents. And though you didn't say so, we know it is a challenge for you to try to resolve problems for people without your level of technical expertise who can't always clearly articulate what's wrong.

### The Bad:

- ✓ We had hoped to get a separate login for Blackboard, a direct "fast lane" to Blackboard, that bypasses MyFSU since once the term gets going, we don't need MyFSU as regularly as Blackboard. This would be particularly helpful in classroom labs when the students log into MyFSU and meander through email, pictures, and schedules before proceeding to the task at hand. It looks as though we won't be getting a separate login for Blackboard/FerrisConnect any time soon.
- ✓ We were advised both in training and in the March meeting that computers must run only one version of Java (1.6\_05 is the last version I know of). All other versions must be deleted, and the computer rebooted to clear the cache. The problems are that many faculty would probably need help doing this on our home computers, and students could be using any version of Java.

### The Ugly Optimistic:

- ✓ We are under contract to Blackboard and we cannot expect this software to be tailored to our specific requests. Having had a very good experience using Sakei, I support changing to open-source software. However, if we can't get open-source, we will remain hopeful and optimistic about whatever Blackboard has in store for us, either upgrades or new products.
- ✓ We've got the Dream Team Tech Staff supporting us. Ω

### A Brief Bibliography of Online Resources

~Jody Ollenquist

#### Books:

- Bender, Tisha. *Discussion-Based Online Teaching to Enhance Student Learning*. Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2003.
- Collison, George, et al. *Facilitating Online Learning: Effective Strategies for Moderators*. Madison, WI: Atwood, 2000.
- Conrad, Rita Marie, and J. Ana Donaldson. *Engaging the Online Learner: Activities and Resources for Creative Instruction*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004.
- Johnson, Kay, and Elaine Magusin. *Exploring the Digital Library: A Guide for Online Teaching and Learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005.
- Palloff, Rena M., and Keith Pratt. *Assessing the Online Learner: Resources and Strategies for Faculty*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009.
- Palloff, Rena M., and Keith Pratt. *Building Online Learning Communities: Effective Strategies for the Virtual Classroom*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007.
- Palloff, Rena M., and Keith Pratt. *Collaborating Online: Learning Together in Community*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005.
- Salmon, Gilly. *E-tivities: The Key to Active Online Learning*. Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2002.
- Shank, Patti, ed. *The Online Learning Idea Book: 95 Proven Ways to Enhance Technology-Based and Blended Learning*. San Francisco: Pfeiffer, 2007.

#### Journals:

- Computers and Composition Online*.  
<http://www.bgsu.edu/cconline/>
- JOLT: *Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*.  
<http://jolt.merlot.org/index.html>
- KAIROS: *A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy*. <http://english.ttu.edu/kairos/>

# Let's Get It Together...

You can earn the first four levels of  
FCTL's *Online Instructor Certification Program*  
alongside your colleagues.

The many *PERKS* include...

- Faculty incentive *MONEY* for levels 2, 3, and 4
- Increased *EFFICIENCY* in your online instruction
- *PRIDE* in the consistently high level of your department's online offerings
- *HELP* with questions that might bog you down if you worked alone
- *REFRESHMENTS!*

**Who:** Sponsored by Languages and Literature's Online Teaching Committee for faculty who teach online or who would like to. Facilitated by one FCTL person and at least one L&L certificate holder.

**What:** 4 two-hour workshops with the second hour optional. The first workshop will introduce the first level (a very simple one) and perhaps proceed to the second level, based on participant demand. Participants may attend any or all of the workshops.

**When:** First 2 workshops: Friday, October 2, and Friday, November 6, from 3:00-4:50 pm.  
Second 2 workshops in the spring, TBA.

**Where:** ASC 1006

**Follow Up:** Continuing support by facilitators and participants until all participants, if possible, have attained the target level before the next workshop.

To sign up, contact Jody, [ollenquj@ferris.edu](mailto:ollenquj@ferris.edu), or Elaine, [mcculloe@ferris.edu](mailto:mcculloe@ferris.edu).

# YOU CAN'T DO LABORATORY SCIENCE ONLINE!

~Charles Bacon

A common belief among many professors who teach laboratory science courses is that such courses cannot be taught effectively online. Usually this opinion is based upon the belief that students will not develop the necessary lab skills in an online experience that are ostensibly developed in face-to-face laboratory learning environments.

One might counter such beliefs by referencing research by Russell (1999) that showed no significant difference in the performances of students, or in course outcomes, between distance-mediated classes and face-to-face, traditional classes. Russell based his conclusions on 355 studies conducted between 1928 and 1998 in which learning outcomes were measured via grades, satisfaction surveys, etc., for a variety of distance learning methodologies.

However, Clark (2000) noted that in the period of Russell's study, the classes were delivered by many different means, which varied from tape recordings to videotapes and computer-assisted learning modules. Clark proposed that the reason no significant difference between the two types of classes was observed was not due to the medium but more likely due to the design of these distance courses and the improvements that were incorporated as a result of the distance format.

Whether one sides with Russell or Clark, the conclusion is that distance-mediated learning is comparable or superior to face-to-face classroom learning. Building from this understanding, I set about in 2005 to develop a fully online Introductory Physics 1 course with a laboratory experience.

Using Tegrity software, I videotaped over PowerPoint presentations, which I generally limited to 10-15 minute segments to encourage students to immediately apply the material to online homework problems. (See Figure 1 for an example slide.) With computer search capability, students could easily locate content that they had found challenging in the homework and also quickly review concepts or examples.

I incorporated online-interactive homework assignments and exams, along with weekly problems, discussions and twice-a-week chat rooms. Initially, students satisfied the laboratory component by using virtual laboratory activities in which they would select components within a laboratory setting and, via click-and-drag, set up experiments that could be run for data collection and analysis. While these virtual labs performed adequately at the time, the quality and versatility of the design was not at the level of current game design formats. In late 2008 I began investigating the potential of migrating from the stand-alone virtual lab experience over into a Second Life platform that would allow multiple students to interact simultaneously in the lab setting. This process is in the early stages and was not available for the 2009 summer online course offerings.

Instead, this summer I replaced the virtual laboratories with hands-on lab kits in which students constructed their experiments and made appropriate measurements in their home setting.

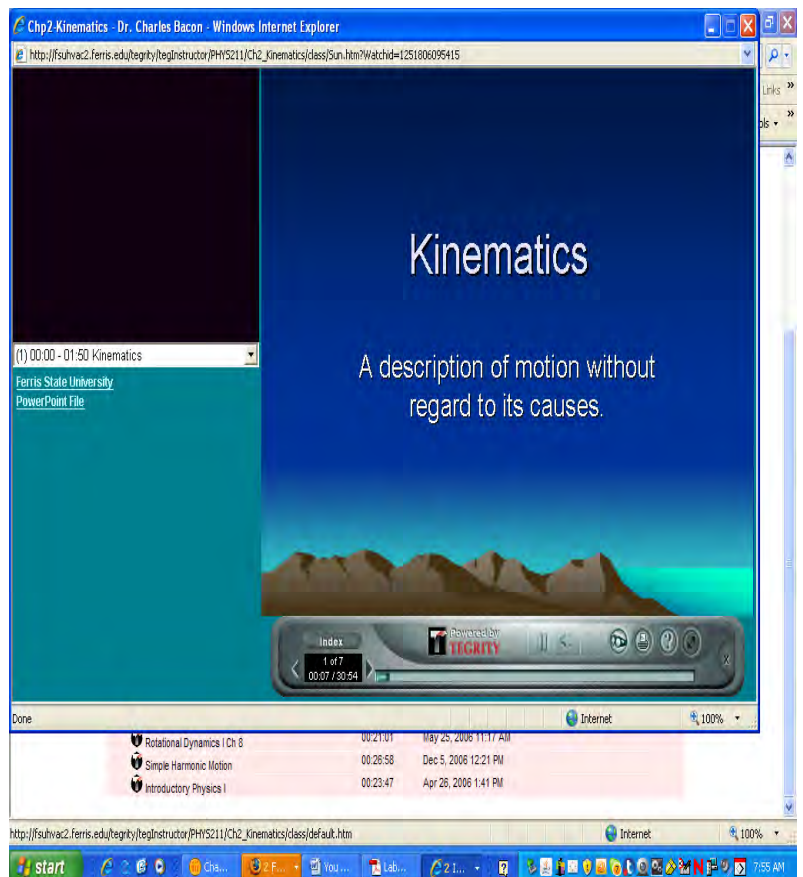


Figure 1: Tegrity-Enhanced PowerPoint

Students submitted laboratory reports in several formats, such as docx, pdf, or jpg; and in many instances, students imbedded photographic evidence to document the experimental setup and/or results. (See Figure 2.)

Both formats for the laboratory component have been satisfactory, but occasional technical problems with the virtual labs sometimes made the experience frustrating for the students. By contrast, aside from one missing resistor, the kit-driven lab was less troublesome to students and replicated the traditional lab experience more faithfully.

The online offerings in physics since 2005 have been well received, and the results, based on student grades, are equivalent to the results from the traditional classroom, with less dispersion in final grades for the online classes than for the regular classroom. Specifically, the class average over several years shows the online students at 0.10 GPA points higher with a comparable standard deviation. A more interesting observation is the percentage of A's, namely 35.5% of the online students received A's as compared to 15.8% of the face-to-face students.  $\Omega$

### References:

Russell, T. L. (1999). The no significant difference phenomenon. Montgomery, AL: IDECC.

Clark, R. (2000). Media will never influence learning. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 42(2), 21-29.

Figure 2: Laboratory Report with Embedded Photographic Evidence

**Lab 14: Temperature and Heat**

**Experiment 14.1: Thermometer Lab**

In this lab you will learn how thermometers make use of the expansion of gas or liquid to measure temperature. Using a few basic materials, you can make your own thermometer that works using the same thermal properties.

**Materials**

- \* 1 clean plastic bottle: either a 20-oz. soda bottle or a squeeze bottle from a condiment such as ketchup
- 1 clear plastic drinking straw
- Modeling clay
- Food coloring

\*You must provide

**Procedure**


1. Fill the bottle about half full with water. Add a few drops of food coloring to make it easier to see.
2. Place the straw through the top of the bottle and into the liquid. Use silly putty (or substitute) to seal the area around the straw and make it air-tight.
3. Gently blow into the straw to fill the bottle with more air. This will push some of the water up the straw. Try to get the water level in the straw to be a few centimeters above the top of the bottle.
4. If you want to, mark the level of the water in the straw—this will be your mark for the current room temperature.
5. Now that you have your thermometer, try placing it under warm running water in the sink. Notice what happens to the water in the straw. Try putting your thermometer in a cold place, too, such as the refrigerator.
4. If you want to, mark the level of the water in the straw—this will be your mark for the current room temperature.
5. Now that you have your thermometer, try placing it under warm running water in the sink. Notice what happens to the water in the straw. Try putting your thermometer in a cold place, too, such as the refrigerator!

**Questions**

1. What happened to the straw water level when you ran the warm water over the bottle? Why does this happen?  
*When I put the bottle that was filled with water and seal it with string under warm water the water moved up the straw until it went out the top of it. This happens because as the water increases in temperature the molecules begin to move around faster creating more pressure.* Pictures of the experiment.

Lab #2 Experiment #1

The Interactions between Charged Materials



### CPTS Effort to Increase Student Retention

In an email dated 8-31-09 to all online instructors, Robbie Teahen, Associate VP of Academic Affairs, stated that “In an effort to improve the retention of students in the fully online courses, we have been looking at ways to intervene early in the semester before a student has gotten too far behind to catch up.” Teahen went on to explain that CPTS would contact online students who did not log in the first day of class to “make sure they know how to log in, they aren’t having any technical issues, and... they still intend to stay in the class.”

On 9-8-09, Cheryl Cluchey, Assistant Dean of CPTS, commented on the effort, stating that “Although it wasn't perfect (lists were not accurate, etc.), I think it was a success. The students seemed very pleased we called them. Even those who had already logged in thanked us for calling, and we did discover several who were having difficulties, or just didn't realize they needed to get logged in. So, overall, I would say it was a success; we will just need to work on streamlining it more for next semester.

“Several faculty sent thank you's as well. Katherine Miller sent a note saying that as of Friday, she had only one student who hadn't logged in and said that was not typical—usually she had a lot more.”

Thanks for your efforts, CPTS!

### FerrisConnect Technical Corner

~Mary Holmes

Here are useful solutions to two problems:

1: In FerrisConnect, if you begin a reply to an email and then, before you finish composing the reply, you click on the link to the original email, your unfinished reply will disappear. The solution is to click on "Save as Draft" before temporarily leaving an email you are writing in reply to another email.

2: When you are working in FerrisConnect, MyFSU often times out, logging you out of FerrisConnect, too, and no dialogue box appears that gives you the option to remain logged in. To solve this problem, just X out of MyFSU right after you get into FerrisConnect. MyFSU is closed and therefore can't time out, so neither will FerrisConnect.



## Travel Notes on the Journey to Multi-Media Happiness in Teaching

~Doug Haneline



Just eight years ago, I was still teaching in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century—at least technologically. I met my classes face-to-face, I had conferences, and I routinely arranged for the death of lots of trees, mostly at the beginning of the semester, so that my students would have a plentiful supply of handouts. At the end of a class session I had to clean the chalk dust off my dark clothes. To be sure, I had made some vigorous steps into the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I had recently begun to use the overhead projector. I had had the FLITE staff prepare orientations to my literature and composition courses, and these orientations included the use of Internet searches and the electronic library catalog. But when I taught in Flint or Traverse City, I drove to the site and conducted face-to-face classes with exactly the same materials and techniques I used in Big Rapids. I knew that all around me, my colleagues were beginning to use computer classrooms, and even the Internet, but like many people who have perfected an approach to teaching based on a seemingly static technology, I was happy with the methods I had developed over a quarter-century career. The students responded favorably and assessment measures indicated learning was taking place. The technology underlying my teaching wasn't broke, so why fix it?

The most comprehensive answer to that question is that it was broke, but I couldn't see the problem. This occurred because of a situation unique to teachers. Most students succeed in our classes because of (or despite) our teaching techniques, so when students do complain, we tend to discount their feedback as sour grapes or laziness. In my case, it took a while to see the underlying impatience my students felt at having to put up with teaching and learning techniques that seemed limiting—they shut out new and worthwhile vehicles of exploration and expression.

Now it would not be fair to say that my teaching was completely frozen in time. During my first fifteen years of teaching, until 1986, I never required that any out-of-class assignment be typed. This was because significant numbers of students came to the four campuses where I taught (including two Land Grant universities) without any means or experience in writing except with a pen or pencil on a piece of paper. When I first came to Ferris, typewriters could be rented in the Rankin Center for twenty-five cents an hour. Requiring typing seemed like a great leap, but after that, in the words of the narrator of Frederik Pohl's "Day Million," the curve of progress, which "takes hell's own time to get started," was soon "going like a bomb." In a few short years, PCs appeared on desks, computer labs popped up all over, print research guides in libraries were replaced by silver platters which in turn were replaced by Internet searches.

You get the idea: after a long period of technological stasis, the landscape changed with incredible rapidity, and suddenly my carefully nurtured teaching technology became an obstacle to learning. What to do, I wondered.

In finding the answer to this question, I was favored by some lucky accidents. Roxanne Cullen, then our department head, was encouraging faculty to experiment with mixed delivery teaching. I would meet the class for two sessions, and the third would be Internet-based. This opportunity gave me an incentive to try something technologically new each semester. A number of those experiments quickly became part of the dustbin of history, but many I have nurtured and continued to develop down to this day. I also decided to start with courses I knew really well. The significance of this decision may not be immediately evident, but for faculty whose learning and teaching environment has been primarily face-to-face, developing an Internet pedagogy means deciding what the Internet equivalents are to what one does face-to-face. By starting with courses I knew well, I was not in the position of having to develop the course and learn a new medium of instruction at the same time.

I learned also to be open-minded and experimental about what medium to choose. For a long time, I delivered most of my Internet courses through private discussion sites at yahoo.com. Yahoo has many advantages as a host for courses, the chief of which are the intuitive quality of its tools, its reliability, and its ubiquity. I still use yahoo.com to conduct synchronous discussions because its features allow very rapid, multi-party discussions, and I also use yahoo.com as a mirror site for my FerrisConnect courses. But I use FerrisConnect because it is the University's course management system and, once one has a sense of what is possible with on-line instruction, any course management system becomes easy to learn and use.

But I also use Facebook for my Internet courses. Right away, I need to make a disclaimer—Facebook is not suitable for hosting a course, and not just for technological reasons. But last spring I was having a technology problem that was ruining a synchronous discussion, and I had the students friend (I know, it's not a verb) me so we could use Facebook's very rapid IM feature for forty minutes of discussion about F. Scott Fitzgerald. And being Facebook friends is not permanent; if you are a Facebook user, you know that "defriending" is an easy and painless process.

As I see it, the Internet provides us teachers with a great opportunity to extend our teaching skills and expand the learning experience of our students. No medium is perfect, or always faultlessly reliable. But we know that anyway—it's why we take handouts to class along with our memory sticks. By starting with mixed delivery courses and constantly experimenting, I was able to develop an Internet pedagogy. I learned to use multiple and complementary instructional media, and not just for back-up purposes. And finally, learning to use new instructional technology has been fun as well as useful. At whatever stage you are in your teaching career, it's worthwhile to expand your teaching repertoire. Ω