

Roundtable

Center for
Teaching,
Learning &
Technology

Fall 2002

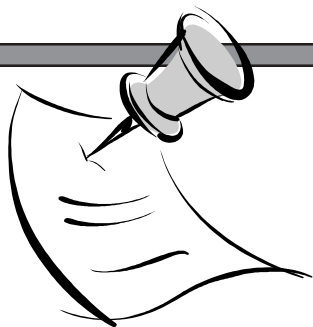
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Newsletter Highlights

Welcome to the fall 2002 edition of the *Roundtable*. The *Roundtable* is published by the Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology and supports faculty development and communication efforts across campus. By keeping you informed about what is happening with instruction and technology, we hope to improve the general climate for communication on campus. You will notice that Communication and Collaboration are the themes of this edition of the *Roundtable*. Inside you will find articles about faculty collaboration, the importance of communicating with students, the rise of communications software and hardware, software that may be communicating about you without your knowledge, and the new RacerNet site, which has been designed to streamline campus communication.

This month also introduces a new *Tips and Trends* column. Beth Call supports some of our more technical activities in CTLT. She will use this column to discuss trends she is following and offer tips.



The Bulletin Board

Campus Instructional News

Instructional Development Grants

This fall has brought another cycle of the Faculty Instructional Grants. Established by the Provost, grant funds will be distributed to permanent full-time faculty who wish to further refine their teaching expertise. The Faculty Development Committee has structured the funding cycle to provide funding opportunities twice a year from a pool of \$15,000 each cycle. The deadline for Fall proposals was 10-21-02. The deadline for Spring proposals will be 3-24-02. For more information, including a list of previously funded projects and an online application, go to RacerNet and select Faculty FYI.

ADA in the Classroom

Did you know that instructional web sites (as well as all other web sites that students use to gain access to or information about the university) must be compliant with Accessibility guidelines as defined in Section 508 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act? Murray State is participating with other institutions in the Commonwealth to develop an approach to addressing this important consideration. Indications are that by fall '03, KYVU will require that all courses offered through them be certified for accessibility by the originating institution.

For details about the ADA and Section 508 and their impact on your course pages, click *Tech Support* at the top of RacerNet. CTLT is offering training to help give you a leg up in the design process (to enroll online click Software Training from RacerNet's home page).

MSU Technology Cup

For the fourth year MSU will host competitions in which graduate and undergraduate students present an assignment in which they have used technology.

Presentations from summer and fall '02 and spring '03 are eligible. Each college will hold an undergraduate semifinals in which Deans select the college representative and winner of the \$100 purse. Judges from local employers will confer the final grand prize. Faculty of winning students will also be recognized. **Application deadline is March 15.** The competitions will be held during Scholars' Week, April 21–25. For details contact CTLT at x2535. For examples from 2002, go to RacerNet's Faculty FYI, select the Teaching and Technology Forum, then click on Student Events.

Professional Communications Initiative Brings Faculty Together on Student Skills

Faculty members across the university have met together in Professional Communications Initiative (PCI) symposia since Fall 2001. On five occasions, faculty members have met to discuss students' writing and verbal communication skills. Issues addressed include writing skills taught in freshman English courses, techniques for working with international students, oral communication instruction, faculty tips for improving student writing, and continuing faculty concerns about student communication skills. At the PCI symposium on October 8, faculty generated ideas for 2002–2003 sessions.

The first Characteristic of the MSU Graduate “ensures graduates who engage in mature, independent thought and express that thought effectively in oral and written communication.” The collegiality of the faculty in addressing this characteristic has involved 30 to 60 faculty members at each symposium.

The 2002–2003 PCI symposia will be Tuesdays, Nov. 19, Feb. 18 and April 8 in the small ballroom at the Curris Center. All faculty are invited to attend.

In the Press

“*The Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education*” were first published by Art Chickering and Zelda Gamson in 1987. In the years since then *The Principles* have become a model for considering the pedagogy of teaching. In “*Seven Principles: Technology as Lever*” excerpted below, Art Chickering and Steve Ehrmann discuss emerging technologies as a means of advancing the seven principles. This edition of the *Roundtable* reports Chickering and Ehrmann’s updated thoughts on the first principal.

1. Good Practice Encourages Contacts Between Students and Faculty.

Frequent student-faculty contact in and out of class is a most important factor in student motivation and involvement. Faculty concern helps students get through rough times and keep on working. Knowing a few faculty members well enhances students’ intellectual commitment and encourages them to think about their own values and plans. Communication technologies that increase access to faculty members, help them share useful resources, and provide for joint problem solving and shared learning can usefully augment face-to-face contact in and outside

of class meetings. By putting in place a more “distant” source of information and guidance for students, such technologies can strengthen faculty interactions with all students, but especially with shy students who are reluctant to ask questions or challenge the teacher directly. It is often easier to discuss values and personal concerns in writing than orally, since inadvertent or ambiguous nonverbal signals are not so dominant. As the number of commuting part-time students and adult learners increases, technologies provide opportunities for interaction not possible when students come to class and leave soon afterward to meet work or family responsibilities.

“Frequent student-faculty contact in and out of class is a most important factor in student motivation and involvement.”

Excerpted from Arthur Chickering and Stephen C. Ehrmann (1996), “Implementing the Seven Principles: Technology as Lever,” *AAHE Bulletin*, October, pp. 3-6. For the full text of the article see <<http://www.tltgroup.org/programs/seven.html>>

Most computer users are familiar with the Adobe Acrobat free reader. Fewer people are aware that it requires purchasing the full product to easily create PDF documents. MSU faculty have been using the full version to save PowerPoint shows and other documents as PDF files for student reference (students do not need PowerPoint to view a PDF file, and they can view it with any computer). What else can it do? It allows students to view or print your documents, but protects against unauthorized changes. It can also allow you to save Web pages as PDF files—just tell it how many layers deep you want to go. You can even convert files into a format that is easily read on handhelds (such as PALM or iPac).



MSU users can purchase Acrobat through our site license for \$19.99 (rather than the retail price of \$60). CTLT regularly conducts training on Adobe Acrobat. To buy a copy complete the form at <<http://www.murraystate.edu/info/reqadobe.pdf>>. Technicians will install the software on your computer.

Reflections...

by Heath Keller



The theme of this month's issue is communication and collaboration. But when you are structuring your classroom activities—it can be lonely out there! The specialized nature of advanced education causes many of us to keep a narrow focus when structuring a class. While collaborative **research** is not uncommon on campus, collaborative **teaching** is more difficult to arrange—or possibly to imagine. This month I'd like to relate some examples of rewarding collaborative activities I've observed and participated in over the past few months. It's been my experience that collaboration in the classroom can be very exciting for both the students AND instructors involved.

In my case, I went outside the College of Business and established a strong TEACHING collaboration with Dr. Ricky Cox in the Department of Chemistry. (Actually Dr. Cox initiated this project, I just happened to be in the right place at the right time.) Last spring, students in his Biochemistry course (CHE 330) and students in my Principles of Management (MGT 350) and Principles of Marketing (MKT 360) courses collaborated on the 'Proteomics Stock Market Project.' Students in both courses were grouped by individual (real) corporations. The chemistry students conducted a technical analysis of their companies based purely on the scientific aspects of the business. Following their research, the marketing groups conducted business-related research on the same companies. In the end, both "sides" had produced a very thorough analysis of each of the chosen

companies and used each others' analysis as they followed the stock performance of "their" companies. Student feedback was very positive. One student cited this structure as "one of the most relevant classes I have ever had".

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The next example is from printmaking and English. Students in Dr. Staci Stone's Women's Literature course (ENG 318) and Nicole Hand's Printmaking II (ART 380) course worked together on a project that they call 'Victor Frankenstein's Creature as an Exquisite Corpse.' With the

English students' assistance, the Printmaking students created prints based on passages from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818). These prints were then divided into three sections. Two of the sections were passed to another member of the class. By combining two sections of their colleagues' works with their own, each student produced a final print made up of sections from three different artists.

The English students participated in a similar activity. The faculty described it this way, "Each student took turns suggesting a theme and writing an introductory phrase that related to the text. This phrase, part of which was hidden, was then given to another student, who added more text. The writings produced from the exquisite corpse technique were printed as captions for the prints." The prints and their captions were recently on display in the Clara M. Eagle gallery in the Curris Center.

This last collaborative example brings together six

Reflections (cont.)

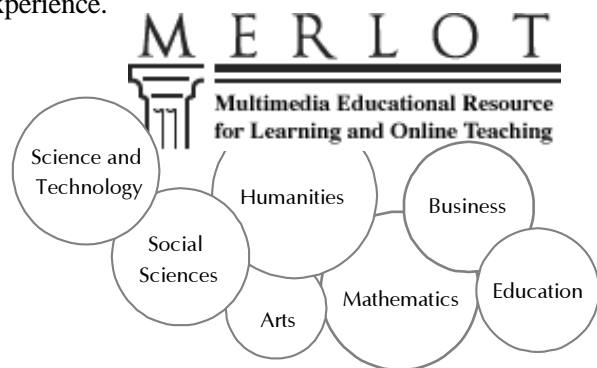
faculty from four different departments in the College of Humanities and Fine Arts. Using the college's "teaching circle" concept as a vehicle, Marcie Johnson (English and Philosophy), Staci Stone (English and Philosophy), Terry Strieter (History), Janice Morgan (Modern Languages), Peggy Schrock (Art), and Meg Brown (Modern Languages) have developed a collaborative version of HUM 212. These faculty members have worked tirelessly to develop this interdisciplinary offering. This group has chosen the time period of 1850–1950 as a focus during the semester. Each of the instructors will be present at each class meeting to provide perspectives and expertise from their individual disciplines. When talking to members of this teaching circle, they are quick to point out that this is a 100% collaborative effort. They have structured the class meetings as free-flowing discussions on the individual issues. They hope to seamlessly move between disciplines in each class meeting. It's very exciting to think that in the course of one class session a student will be exposed to the literature (American and British), historical events, art, and international cultural issues of the time. The course will be first offered Spring 2003.

I think that it is safe to say that collaboration is alive and well at Murray State. With projects such as these, both faculty and students benefit. If you get a chance to speak with any of the faculty mentioned in these three examples, they will undoubtedly talk about how much they have learned from their colleagues outside of their individual disciplines. This excitement generally spreads to the students. Collaborations such as these help students place their class assignments into a broader context—one that helps make their learning more relevant. Collaborative opportunities are everywhere. We just have to get out there and make them happen.

Try MERLOT

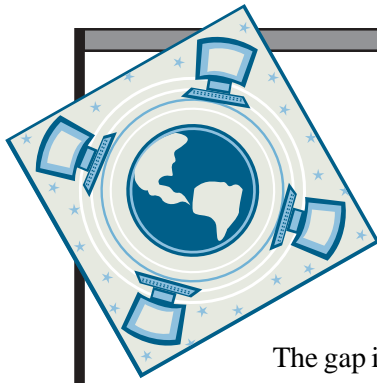
The Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching (MERLOT) is a free resource. It allows faculty to share course materials and assignments with links to annotations that include peer review and evaluation. MERLOT is linked from RacerNet's Faculty FYI page.

MERLOT is an international cooperative for high quality online resources to improve learning and teaching within higher education. The cooperative connects consortiums, institutions of higher education, professional organizations of academic disciplines, and individual members to form a *community* of people who strive to enrich the teaching and learning experience.



Email Lists Now Available!

As of October 1, it is possible to request email lists of students by major, college, classification or other demographic maintained in the student records. Requests may be made for official university business. To request an email accounts file, contact Tracy Roberts in the Registrar's Office at tracy.roberts@murraystate.edu for a request form. Once the request has been received and approved, the email accounts file will be available within a few days.



Tips & Trends

Instant Messaging Goes to Work

The gap is widening. While increasing numbers of college students are using instant messaging (IM) to communicate with each other, many college faculty know very little about it. However, it is helpful to be aware of why people use it—and why some choose not to.

What is IM? Basically, it is software that allows you to establish a list of contacts with whom you are willing to exchange immediate messages while you are online. It differs from email in that the exchange is real time. You can tell who is available and able to answer you immediately—and who is away from their desk. You can “chat” with someone two offices away—or two continents away. IM can permit quick questions to be answered immediately, but it can also interrupt you in the middle of a phone conversation or while you are trying to concentrate on something else.

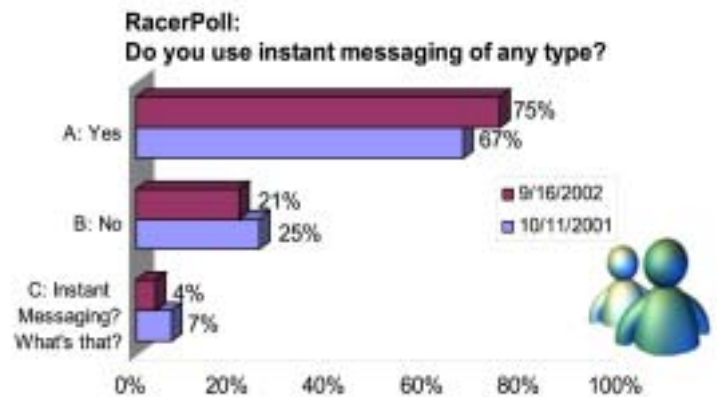
IM is nothing new to college students. The Pew Internet & American Life Project, “The Internet Goes to College”, states that, “While about half of all Internet users have sent instant messages, nearly three quarters of college Internet users have done so, and college Internet users are twice as likely to use instant messaging on any given day compared to the average Internet user.” While IM is largely used to keep in touch with friends, it also is used as a tool for online collaboration of group projects and to contact an instructor who provides “virtual” office hours.

Beyond the college crowd, IM is also seeing growth in the workplace. Business users are now conducting virtual conferences and checking in with remote co-workers through IM. The Wall Street Journal recently published an article titled, “Instant Messaging Takes Off Within the Corporate World” (Bulkeley,

September 4, 2002). It states that IM was brought in to corporations by “20-somethings who simply download free IM software...to maintain the connections they got used to in college.” But companies are adapting this technology. IM gives supervisors and co-workers the ability to determine if business associates are available to answer questions and work on collaborative projects.

International Data Corp. research shows that 20 million people worldwide were using IM in business by the end of 2001, and it predicts that figure will soar to 300 million by the end of 2005.

The full report of “The Internet Goes to College” is available at <http://www.pewinternet.org/reports/pdfs/PIP_College_Report.pdf>.



Identical RacerPoll questions asked in 2001 and 2002 indicate an increase in use of instant messaging among the campus community. It also coincides with Pew’s analysis that nearly three quarters of college Internet users have used IM.

■ Beth Call, CTLT



Under Merlin's Hat

Campus Technology News

Are You Harboring a Spy?

Have you noticed an increase in pop-up or banner ads that seem to be targeted directly at you? Or have you experienced problems connecting to sites such as Blackboard or Webmail? You may not have either of these symptoms and still be a victim of “adware” or “spyware” technology.

Adware, itself, may simply display advertising messages and may not be infringing on your privacy. But some install a small, hidden tracking program on your hard drive. This additional tracking software (called spyware) is sending data and statistics about you and your surfing habits to advertisers or other interested parties. You can also get spyware when you download files from the Internet—particularly from sites such as Morpheus or Kazaa, BearShare, or Gator. You may also unintentionally install spyware programs on your machine by clicking on banner ads that announce that you have “1 message waiting” or “1 prize waiting” or that you can “boost internet connection speeds”.

Spyware is not illegal. Generally, you agree to install the spyware when you click the accept button on the license agreement of the software that you want to install. However, there are privacy issues that concern many Internet users, particularly if the companies have not clearly disclosed the information they are collecting about you. Often, users are not aware that personal information is being passed on to third parties.

What you can do...

- ◆ Before downloading a freeware program, go to www.spychecker.com and type in the program's name. If the program in question is in Spychecker's database of known spyware applications, you will

be provided with the advertiser's name and the company's privacy policy for your review.

- ◆ Download sites, such as ZDNet Downloads, have begun posting notices on applications that use ad-sponsored spyware. Pay attention to these notices. Also, while installing the program, carefully read the licensing agreements and registration information requested.
- ◆ If the program provides banner advertising in the user interface, it may be using spyware. If so, the next time you connect to the Internet, information about you will be sent to the advertiser. You may then notice a fresh supply of ads in the application's interface based on the sites you visited.
- ◆ Use a program like Lavasoft's Ad-Aware to detect and remove the most commonly used spyware. These utilities scan your system for the most common advertising spyware and let you select which items to remove. Simply removing the free application will not remove the tracking software.

Popular Programs:

- ◆ **Ad-Aware** www.lavasoft.de/
Currently the most complete detection and removal tool. Offers a free download version for personal use.
- ◆ **Spychecker** www.spychecker.com
Desktop tool that can be used to access the Spychecker database of known spyware applications.

For more information, go to RacerNet's Tech Support page and click on the Spyware Resources link.

Designing for Usability

As CTLT began the redesign of RacerNet, we realized that we had quite an audience to consider. We wanted the site to provide quick access to information that faculty, staff, and students often need. With this in mind, we turned to representatives of these groups for their help and suggestions. Our focus group let us know of common sites of interest and resources that they would like to see linked on RacerNet.

This approach of considering and interviewing audience representatives is part of user-centered design. **User-centered design considers how a person's perception, memory, learning style, and problem-solving skills will interact with the information presented.** It reminds us that the audience should always be in our mind as we develop information. We should be thinking about their background knowledge, their needs, and their goals. Our goal then is to lead people to the information they need. This is nothing new to education. How we present information has a significant influence on how the information is received and retained...or rather, how it is used.

We want to thank all of our usability test participants for their help and suggestions. We hope that you are finding the new design easy to use and have found quick access to the information you need. If you haven't visited RacerNet's **Faculty FYI** section yet, please take a second to see what resources and quick links we have listed for you. If you have other suggestions for the site, please let us know by dropping a note in the Suggestion Box (listed under Favorite Links on the RacerNet homepage).

Notice the New RacerNet?

As we hope you have noticed, RacerNet has a new look AND new mission. CTLT has worked with many campus groups and individuals to identify important campus sites that had previously been difficult or impossible to find. So what will you find on the new RacerNet? You can now:

- ◆ Request a MAP report (Under Faculty FYI tab)
- ◆ Complete a student retention alert form (Faculty FYI)
- ◆ Get help avoiding SPAM, viruses, or spyware (Tech Support)
- ◆ Find Workshops offered on campus (Software Training - RacerNet homepage)
- ◆ Obtain hiring procedures and forms for exempt or hourly employees (Administrative)
- ◆ Find the catering menu and prices (Administrative)
- ◆ Access the Faculty Handbook (Faculty FYI)

If you need it—it is probably there. To get the maximum benefit from RacerNet—and to keep up with campus news—set your homepage to RacerNet (<http://racernet.murraystate.edu/>). If you need help, call x2535 and we can walk you through the process.