

Using E-Learning Methods in the Workplace

Dr. Martha Cleveland-Innes & Dr. Mohamed Ally

A research project employing an experimental design tested two delivery platforms, WebCT and vClass, in the generation of affective learning outcomes in the workplace. The research proceeded as a pilot, and will be re-instituted again this fall with modifications based on results from the pilot. Using a sample of volunteer participants in the help desk industry, participants were randomly assigned to one of the two types of delivery software. Thirty-eight subjects participated from ten different corporations across Western Canada. This presentation is an interim report.

The context and objectives of this project are as follows. Interest in affective learning outcomes rest on many reasons, but the most notable relate first to distance education delivery and second to a skill shortage in the Canadian workplace. For clarity, the term affective learning is considered as follows. Combining the theories of Krathwohl and Gange, the affective domain of learning outcomes is concerned with the internalization of attitudes and values. The first rationale: the value of distance education for outcomes in the cognitive domain has been established, and outcomes in the psychomotor domain are now under scrutiny, there is less evidence of value of distance education in the generation of affective outcomes.

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Dr. Mohamed Ally

Dr. Mohamed Ally is an Associate Professor, Centre for Distance Education at Athabasca University. He has a Masters in Educational Technology and a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology. Dr. Ally currently designs and teaches distance education and on-line courses. His research interest includes learning style in on-line environments and affective learning outcomes in distance education.

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Editor's Message

Camille Jensen

Ah....sweet summer....

The students are out. The hallways are bare. What an excellent time to spend a day at the lake, feet up on the lounge chair sipping a scintillatingly cold beverage.

Yeah right! We all know summer can be one of the busiest times of year for distance educators, instructional designers and the like. Many of us are in full production preparing courses for Fall delivery. Others are revamping, rewriting, redoing courses from last year. We hope this Summer issue of *The Distance* can provide you some reverie from your work.

Martha Cleveland-Innes and Mohamad Ally from Athabasca tell us about their latest research on workplace e-learning in the cover article. Jennifer Geary, who is becoming a regular columnist, shares her piece on "On-line Counselling with Women Offenders." Be sure to take a look at the article by Joel Foreman. Joel's article has been republished with permission from *The Technology Source* (<http://ts.mivu.org>). It takes a practical look at synchronous learning options available. As usual we conclude with our "Updates from the Field."

This issues has lots of ADETA based news too. President Ingrid reminds us of the good times had at the Interface conference at NAIT. Take moment to review pages 4 and 5 and meet your new ADETA Board. It is never too soon to be thinking about your next professional development session. Plans for the Fall Workshop are well under way. Check page 6 for details and the registration form. And...we are starting preparations for Interface 2004! (Details on page 19.)

Somewhere in the midst of revamping, rewriting, redoing make yourself a scintillatingly cold beverage. Get those feet on the lounge chair and enjoy *The Distance!*

Ciao,

Camille

About this Publication

The Distance is published quarterly by the Alberta Distance Education & Training Association as a service to its members. We welcome your comments and suggestions. Send comments by email to the Editor, Camille Jensen (camille.adeta@shaw.ca) or by regular mail:

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President's Message

Interface 2003, It's a Wrap!

Ingrid Stammer

Late on the afternoon of May 30, wandering around the remnants of the Interface 2003 conference I was amazed that it was all over except for the accounting and clean-up. The conference had taken a year to plan. There

had been so many decisions made to bring the three days together. At times it seem that there were as many decisions that should have been made and carried-out, but were missed. In spite of what had not been decided, the conference was a success. As always, not everything went off as planned, but most things looked as if they went well. When you are involved in the planning and execution of an event, as long as nothing significant was broken, and there were no noticeable disasters it was a good conference. Here it was the end of the three days and all I could remember were the keynote speakers.

Dr. Roger Schank delivered exactly what he had promised, an engaging, and energetic presentation that had his listeners reflecting on their current practices. Dr. Shank questioned why we insist on comparing and modelling online learning to the classroom. He sees the online environment as being better than the classroom. The online environment allows an individual to enter a world where various approaches can be modelled, tried, evaluated, and tried again. It is an environment that can awaken the mind. It can build on personal experience and create new experiences. It allows us to teach students how to make a living and how to live, instead of pumping out theory.

Where Dr. Schank dazzled us with the potential of technology, Dr. Carolyn Mamchur presented an emotionally charged presentation focusing on humanizing the teaching and learning experience. Her joy of teaching comes from creating meaningful relationships with students. Dr. Mamchur believed that this could only be done in a face-to-face environment. She needed to be coaxed into developing online courses. Eventually she was convinced, somewhat, that an online course could be effective. The instructor would need to be emotionally and intellectually attached to the course, and the course would have to engage the student at various levels including their basic needs. From her experience she has found that it is important to zero in on the content by establishing criteria to guide the development of the course, and ensure that the final product is well organized in a safe and comfortable environment.

The presentations were very different. Each had it's own kind of energy and approach. Surprisingly, both keynote speakers were saying similar things from different perspectives. Dr. Schank and Dr. Mamchur believe that personal narrative of the student is an important element of a course. It allows an engagement of the student with the material that is essential to learning. Both speakers stressed that learning must be personal to be effective. It is a powerful message regardless of the bearer.

ADETA Annual General Meeting

During Interface the ADETA membership met for the Annual General Meeting. The committee reports showed that the organization is healthy and growing; we are financially stable; our professional development program continues to grow; the display has been revitalized; and the newsletter has seen significant changes in layout and content. We did not have suitable submissions for this year's Research Award, and will offer it again next year.

Only two positions were up for election: a Director at Large and President, which is elected yearly to a maximum of two terms. Pattie Mascaro, an Instructional Designer from Mount Royal College, is the new Director at Large, and I was brought back for a final term as President.

The out going board member was Jeff Hamilton, who was not able to attend this year's conference. We thanked Jeff for all his work at the AGM. Since he was not able to hear the recognition and applause he so richly deserves I will repeat myself. Jeff has been an asset to the ADETA board. His good-natured presence and willingness to take on work made him an endearing colleague. His major contribution was to organize Interface 2001 in Lethbridge. He did a great job of planning and mounting the conference. Thank you Jeff for all your help, knowledge, and energy. The Board will miss you.

Next Year

As the last of the dozen or so boxes of padfolios and the ADETA display were loaded into the back of my car, I was already wondering about next year's conference and how it would evolve. Interface 2004 is being hosted in Calgary at SAIT. The chairperson for the conference is Leona Dvorak, Curriculum Coordinator in the Information and Communications Technologies Department at SAIT. She will need a great deal of support to make those many decisions that bring the conference to life. Watch for more information about the next Interface as it comes available on the listserv and in the newsletter. Or feel free to volunteer by contacting me at ingrid_stammer@cpr.ca. ■

Announcements

ADETA Board Elected at Annual General Meeting

In the midst of Interface excitement we managed to squeeze in the ADETA Annual General Meeting. Our President, Ingrid Stammer will be with us for another one year term. We are pleased to welcome our newest member of the board, and Director at Large, Patty Mascaro. After several dedicated years with the ADETA Board, we extend a fond farewell to Jeff Hamilton of Lethbridge College.

President: Ingrid Stammer

ingrid_stammer@cpr.ca

Ingrid Stammer is with the Performance Technology Design Group at Canadian Pacific Railway. As a Lead Designer she provides support to CP business units by assessing employee technical skills and performance, then developing, implementing, and evaluating performance improvement initiatives. Current projects include the introduction of several technology mediated training programs.

Ingrid has an extensive background in distance education. She has developed and implemented programs and training resources for faculty, staff and students at post-secondary institutions as well as in a corporate setting. In recent years she has shifted her focus to Human Performance Technology. Her current interest is in humanizing technology mediated instruction.

Past President: Fae Jackson

fjackson@mtroyal.ab.ca

Fae Jackson has been a faculty member at Mount Royal Community College for 20 years. She has been teaching in Advance Studies in Mental Health, a distance delivery program for 9 years. This program is a multi-model delivery system using a variety of older and newer technology. Over the last few years she has been trying to integrate the web as part of her distance teaching. She believes strongly in a team approach when developing and learning about how we can integrate technology into our learning environments. ADETA has been another wonderful means of increasing her networking and sharing ideas about how we can make a difference in our delivery and teaching.

Treasurer: Barb Pearce

Barb.Pearce@norquest.ca

Barb Pearce has been with NorQuest College for 17 years and currently manages the Educational Technologies and Media Development Services department. She coordinates the development of online courseware, college publications and websites, and web applications, and the provision of support and training for the use of educational technology for staff and students. Previously, she worked in the areas of curriculum development, technical support, and technology training at the



ADETA Board 2003 (from left):
Daph Crane, Pattie Mascaro, Ingrid Stammer, Barb Pearce,
Stephen Walker, Christine Marles
missing: Fae Jackson

college. Barb has been a member of ADETA for many years and has served on the board as Treasurer for the past three years. She is enrolled in the Masters of Distance Education program at Athabasca University.

Secretary: Stephen Walker

swalker@adlc.ca

Stephen Walker is the Program Coordinator for Resource Development at the Alberta Distance Learning Centre (ADLC). Mr. Walker manages the development of new print and online distance learning resources for primary and secondary learners across the province. As an educator, Mr. Walker highly values qualitative resources that effectively work to break the barriers to education and meet the needs of distant learners throughout. Stephen has been a part of the Alberta Distance Education Training Association for four years and has served this community as a board member for the past two. Stephen is

committed to facilitating and learning from his fellow ADETA members and working with the membership to promote good practice and sound teaching for distance education.

Director at Large: Daph Crane

dcrane@bowvalleycollege.ca

Daph Crane is an Instructional Designer/Program Evaluator with Learning Resource Services at Bow Valley College. She is a graduate of Athabasca University Master's of Distance Education program. The bulk of Daph's instructional design work is with the ESL and Business and Industry Departments. Her program evaluation work spans across all program departments at Bow Valley College. She has a special interest in professional development. Daph has been a member of ADETA for 4 years and has been living in Alberta for 3 1/2 years (originally from St. John's, Newfoundland). Outside of work, Daph enjoys swimming, reading, outdoor life and needlework.

Director at Large: Christine Marles

cmarles@bowvalleycollege.ca

Christine Marles is a distance education specialist who has worked in Canada and Singapore. Christine's focus is on making education accessible and effective through systematic development and implementation of distance learning technologies. Christine is the Manager of Learning Resources Services, Bow Valley College and is a partner in Open Learning

Consultants. Christine has worked in distance education for more than 17 years and holds a Master of Distance Education degree from Athabasca University. Christine is a past President of the Alberta Association for Continuing Education and is looking forward to her work as an ADETA Board member.

Director at Large: Pattie Mascaro

pmascaro@mtroyal.ab.ca

Pattie Mascaro's favourite quote is by Joseph Campbell: "Follow your bliss . . . and doors will open where you didn't know they were going to be." Following her own bliss, Pattie has encountered many open doors. At the University of Windsor, open doors led to a collection of degrees (B.A. and M.A. in English, and a Bachelor of Education). Another door opened to Newfoundland, where she promoted student learning in literacy and communication (as an Instructor and Literacy Coordinator for Eastern College, and President of the Burin Peninsula Laubach Literacy Council). Her fascination with Educational Technology brought Pattie to her current position as an Instructional Design Consultant in the Academic Development Centre at Mount Royal College. As a member of the Instructional Design Team, Pattie supports faculty in the development of hybrid and online (distance) courses/programs which facilitate flexible learning opportunities for students. Pattie sees her appointment to the ADETA board as another open door, and looks forward to sharing ideas and learning with the ADETA membership. ■



We'd like to extend our thanks for your help with Interface 2003!

...to the Conference Organizing Committee

- including Bill Fricker, Barb Pearce, Christine Marles, Daph Crane, Ingrid Stammer, Nicole Luchkow, Linda Apps, Linda Withers, Rosina Smith, Susan Kerr and Val Stewart.

...to The Alberta Online Consortium

- for partnering with us to present Interface 2003.

...to NAIT

- for hosting Interface 2003, through the cooperative efforts of staff in Materials Management, Technology & Curriculum Innovation, Catering, Facilities and the Timetabling Office.

... to NorQuest College Centre for Innovation and Development

- for the design, layout and editing of conference publications.

... to Grant MacEwan College

- for hosting pre-conference workshops.

... and special thanks to

- the vendors who set up booths and provided gifts.
- Access: The Education Station for producing and airing the Interface 2003 Infomercial.
- Arlene Driscoll and her students from Centre High School who were the session hosts.
- keynote speakers, Dr. Roger Schank and Dr. Carolyn Mamchur.
- all the presenters.
- all the participants who came to learn, share and network.

Keeping it Simple for the Learner

Register for the Fall Workshop Today!

Yes, it is time to plan your fall professional development activities! The ADETA Fall Workshop 2003 is being hosted by Olds College. "Keeping It Simple for the Learner" will be held on Wednesday, October 1, 9am to 4pm in Olds at the Olds College Alumni Centre.

The ADETA Fall Workshop focuses on networking, as this is a wonderful opportunity for both "newbies" and experienced distance educators to get together and discuss new developments, best practices, great ideas, and learn from each other in a relaxed setting.

We're very pleased that Bob Wilson, Vice-President Academic at Olds College, will be presenting the opening address. Concurrent session presenters include the ever-popular presenter and ADETA member, Rod Corbett, who will deliver a session on "Designing Simple Yet Effective Study Guides". Other topics include effective instructional design, how to choose web resources for online courses and address digital copyright issues, and more.

If you need more information about the ADETA Fall Workshop, please contact Christine Marles at cmarles@bowvalleycollege.ca. ■

Call for Proposals

Proposals are now being accepted for the ADETA Fall Workshop, to be held at Olds College on October 1, 2003. This year's theme is "Keeping It Simple for the Student." This workshop will provide an opportunity for practitioners, neophytes and support staff to discuss and share practices, new technologies, opportunities, successes, and problems in delivering effective distance learning – with a focus on keeping things simple for learners. Workshop sessions will be a minimum of 45 minutes in length. There are opportunities for longer sessions if required. Please note that no computer labs are available for these sessions.

To submit a proposal please provide the following information:

- Session title
- Session format (presentation, hands-on session)
- Content: In 300 words or less describe the purpose and outline the activities of the workshop
- Session objective
- Media requirements
- Contact Person: Name, address, phone number, e-mail
- Session presenters: Name, address, phone number, e-mail

Please direct all inquiries and proposals to Christine Marles at cmarles@bowvalleycollege.ca. You can also reach Christine at (403) 410-1644.

Deadline for proposals is August 5, 2003. The workshop sessions will be available after August 31, 2003 on the ADETA website. ■

Fall Workshop Registration Form

Name:

ADETA

Member: \$60.00

Non

Member: \$80.00

Institution or Organization:

Payment: Cheque

please make cheques payable to ADETA

P.O. Number

Address:

including city, province and postal code

Mail Registration

to:

ADETA Fall Workshop 2003
 Box 47022
 62 Edmonton Centre
 Edmonton AB T5J 4N1

Did you see the new ADETA display?



As you browsed around the Interface conference, perhaps you noticed the ADETA display. Did you know our display is brand new? We unveiled our new display at Interface 2003 among the vendors' booths. We had all the past year's issues of *The Distance* available too.

We are able to boast our proud new addition with the continuing support of Clayton Wright, from Grant MacEwan College. Clayton provided staff time, the pictures and put us together with the production company to create our updated display. You'll see the ADETA display at many ADETA and other related functions in the future.

Our gratitude and thanks go out to Clayton for his enduring support of ADETA! ■



Do you design or facilitate online learning?

Are you looking for ways to improve your skills? Perhaps e-learning is a field you want to explore? Turn to the U of C Faculty of Continuing Education for individual courses, or learn how you can get started on the road to e-learning certification. All courses are taught entirely through online study.

Professional development in the field of e-learning is also available through the international Best Practices in e-Learning Online Conference.



Best Practices in e-Learning Online Conference - August 13 & 14, 2003

- Three Keynote Presentations
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- Affordable Registration Fee!

Check out the Web site for details at
<http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/conference/>

Certificate in e-Learning: Design and Facilitate Learning Online - Fall 2003 Courses

- e-Learning: Principles and Practice, Sept. 15 - Dec. 15, 2003
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Workplace continued from page 1

Dr. Martha Cleveland-Innes & Dr. Mohamed Ally

Second, according to Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) soft skills are in short supply in the Canadian workforce. A recent report entitled “The Importance of Soft Skills in the Current Canadian Labour Market” outlines a lack of soft skill development across many occupational sectors. The definition of soft skills is yet unclear, but they are identified as the following skills:

- Ability to communicate effectively
- Creativity
- Analytical thinking
- Problem-solving skills
- Leadership skills
- Team-building skills
- Listening skills
- Diplomacy
- Flexibility
- Change-readiness
- Self-awareness

What do these skills matter? According to Goleman (1995), employees with appropriate soft skills perform beyond expectations. In a social justice, more humanitarian argument, soft skills provide the capacity for smooth running human relations – a benefit in the lives of each individual on many fronts. Soft skill development occurs primarily, but not exclusively, in the affective domain. In particular, the report singles out the high tech industry as most in need of soft skill training. How does SST compare to other types of training? The report says:

..... hard skills training is easier to define, and the paybacks of technical training are perhaps more immediately apparent as a result—it is much easier to ascertain whether someone has mastered a software program than ascertaining whether they have learned appropriate listening skills. Soft skills’ training is generally more nebulous, and requires the passage of time to take hold. Soft skills are basically learned patterns of behavior and, as such, are difficult to ‘unlearn’ and replace with new patterns of behavior (MacLeod, 2000)

In sum:

- We are interested in the generation of affective learning outcomes online delivery, theoretically, for its own sake.
- Understanding this may contribute to the resolution of an important social and economic issue – the soft skill shortage in the Canada workplace

The help desk industry was identified as the population for this study, because it falls into the high needs area identified by HRDC in terms of required soft skill development and because the researchers have experience training help desk analysts in a face-to-face environment. The study employs an experimental design, with a course in online customer service as the education intervention, and online instructional platform as the treatment variable. Estimates of soft skills competency was evaluated in a self-test, pre and post training. (A copy of this instrument is available from the authors at martic@athabascau.ca). Testing the instrument was part of this pilot. Organizations belonging to the HDI of Canada were recruited through a membership newsletter. Training was offered without cost, but organizations were required to commit the technology, employees and required time to the project. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two groups.

“Facilitator immediacy in reference to requests and feedback ...was accomplished online through timely response to postings, e-mails, telephone calls and questions asked in synchronous discussions.”

The education intervention, or course, was designed with reference to the generation of affective outcomes. Facilitation support for affective outcomes was offered by ensuring the following events were part of the learning experience. A high touch environment was created in both WebCT and vClass. High touch learning environments include facilitation that is learner-centred, with demonstrable validation and, where possible, accommodation of student needs and objectives. Facilitator immediacy in reference to requests and feedback was a critical facilitation goal. This was accomplished online through timely response to

postings, e-mails, telephone calls and questions asked in synchronous discussions. Facilitator identification of standards, requirements, customer service models and exemplary customer service models provided external reference for individual actions. Self-awareness exercises, reflection opportunities, practice requirements and application exercises were embedded in the instructional design.

Based on research in traditional delivery and emerging premises in online research, high levels of interaction between students and student-facilitator were fostered. Interaction in this case is seen to foster reflection, thoughtful consideration, and examination of personal responses to events around relating to others.

We chose WebCT and VClass as our learning platforms. WebCT provides content as well as communication support; vClass is a collaborative online working environment for synchronous engagement of participants.

WebCT offered:

- Content support
- Text, audio, video material
- Asynchronous threaded discussion
- Synchronous chat
- Group work
- Support for learner presentations
- 24-7 access

vClass offered:

- Synchronous online presentation
- Audio interaction/synchronous text chat
- Group work/application sharing
- Collaborative
- One hour per week

The key treatment variable in this experiment is type of interaction. Interaction in WebCT was solely asynchronous; neither students nor the instructor employed the chat function. vClass students engaged in audio and text synchronous interaction once per week. Other communication occurred through e-mail, but minimally. Content, exercises, assignments and examinations were identical across treatment groups.

During the delivery process, other differences emerged:

- vClass attendance highly variable and access to content challenging
- Enthusiasm for the tool very high
- WebCT increased engagement and access to self-tests
- Range of exam scores was much higher for WebCT; higher variability in experience



Assessing affective outcomes needs all the criteria of any education assessment: educational judgment and thoughtful measurement. Affective results are qualitative, and need to be treated as such. In general, you have the opportunity for observation and self-report; even observation comes with a translation of affect into observable measures. There is also a relationship between cognition and affect – which needs to be considered if not measured.

Two assessment measures were used: A final exam of multiple choice and short answer questions asked about appropriate

responses, possible courses of actions, and attitudes toward customers. A self-assessment tool, also in the pilot stage, was used as a pre and post-test. Nine soft skills, as identified by HRDC, were each given two items. Each item is a statement regarding participant behavior, to which they answered on a Likert scale.

Group average exam score varied across the two groups. Descriptive data identifies greater range, lower standard deviation and a higher range for WebCT. The mean score is higher. Self-assessment, post-tests results could not be accurately compared at the time of writing.

Exam scores correlated with Learning Style, as identified by completion of the Kolb Learning Style instrument:

- Assimilators the largest proportion (36%); average to high exam scores
- Divergers and convergers in equal numbers (27%)
- Diverger exam scores average to very high
- Convergers greater variability in exam scores from low to very high
- Few accommodators (9%); average exam scores

This research is part of the EduSource Learning Objects research at Athabasca University. Students in both sections of the course had access to the Digital Reading Room at AU, and were introduced to topics related to be supplemental to course material. Presented as Learning Objects, participants were asked several questions when they opened a learning object and when they

closed the object (Demonstration). This pilot will guide further research on the learner-use perspective of the learning object initiative. ■

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Online Counselling with Women Offenders

Jennifer Geary

It is the position of the writer that online counseling with women offenders may be a potential new service approach that could assist some women offenders in some situations. There is a growing body of literature on on-line counselling and its relationship to personal and social development. Some professionals have argued that on-line counselling is a fad amongst those counsellors and clients who look for a quick-fix solution to personal and social problems experienced by clients. The concept of on-line counselling has captured the attention of the American Counselling Association and the American Psychological Association. While interest in and use of the concept has increased, a critical review and synthesis of the literature on on-line counselling does not currently exist. Such an integrative review together with field research will serve to “shed light” on the methodological approaches, and implications of on-line practices with women offenders in the criminal justice system.

On-line Counselling

Cambridge Strategies Inc. (2003, pp. 12 - 14) indicates that offender rehabilitation may involve counselling, further education and training. Developments with Internet based technologies give rise to new approaches that may transcend geographical location and time. The researcher's background in distance education and clinical practice suggests to her that the virtual presence of the counsellor may be brought about through on-line counselling (Jenkins, Price & Straker, 2002, p. 67). This is not to underestimate the effectiveness of face-to-face counselling (Fenichel, 2002b, p. 1). Fenichel (2002a, p. 1; 2002b, p. 1) refers to the development of psychotherapy through telephone, teleconferencing and the Internet. On-line counselling may take place in chat rooms, electronic messenger, video conferencing, email, fax and phone (Barak, 1999, p. 12; King & Moreggi, 1998, p. 3; Trims, 2003b, p. 1). Professionals from a variety of backgrounds including psychology, psychotherapy, psychiatry, law, and education provide on-line counselling. (Barak, 1999, p. 1; Munro, 2002, p. 1; Rye & Rye, 2003; Suler, 2000, p. 1; Sterling, 2003, p. 1; Trims, 2003b, p.1). These professionals are from such countries as Australia, Canada, the United States and England.

Fenichel (2002b, p. 6) and the International Society for Mental Health On-line (2003, p. 2) refer to the benefits of asynchronous communications for counsellors to connect with offenders almost at any time. On-line counselling may assist counsellors and other mental health professionals to help offenders who live in remote areas and/or have limited

time in which to consult with professionals (American Psychological Association, 2003, p. 1; Trims, 2003a, p. 1). On-line counselling is being offered to assist with problems associated with unemployment, grief, depression, abuse, addiction, adultery, anger, assertion, conflict, eating disorders, couples and family issues, sexuality and stress (Barak, 1999, p. 5; Munro, 2002, p. 2; Rye & Rye, 2003, pp. 1 - 4). Offenders who are transitioning from prison to the community may experience challenges associated with anxiety, isolation and maladaptive lifestyles.

Barak (1999, p. 17) suggests that a lack of standards for on-line counselling may allow unqualified and poorly qualified individuals to promote therapeutic services. This may cause harm to women offenders and may lead them to relapse. Fenichel (2002b, p. 2) suggests that on-line counselling may not be appropriate for women offenders who experience “extreme psychopathology”. Munro (2002, p. 1) and Sterling (2003, p. 2) suggest that offenders who are suicidal should contact suicide crisis centres. Fenichel (2002b, p. 7) and Suler (2000, p. 1) refer to other disadvantages of on-line counselling as including lack of face-to-face communication. Furthermore, the American Counselling Association (1999, p. 12) suggests that counsellors may face challenges in maintaining the complete confidentiality of messages generated through computer-mediated communication.

Professionals

Macdonald (1999, p. 35, 103, 171, 174) mentions that professionals can be altruistic and become “public spirited”. Biestek (1957, p.i) and James & Gilliland (2000, p. 609) refer to the significance of the mutual relationship between the person seeking assistance and the professional. On-line counselling may be a means of building a relationship between counsellors and women offenders. In some situations on-line counselling could escalate inequities in power between counsellors and offenders. On-line counsellors should be competent to assist women offenders in part by lessening power imbalances. Vickers (1995, p. 74) suggests that competency is associated with the balancing of training, qualifications, professional status, adequacy of intervention, understanding, aptitudes, values and judgments. The American Counselling Association (1999, pp. 12-13) suggests that a competent on-line counsellor will advise offenders that the confidentiality of their electronic communications may not be safeguarded. Counsellors will advise women offenders of other risks, benefits and processes that may be involved in on-line counselling (International Society for Mental Health On-line, 2003, p. 1). Offenders will ideally then be in a position to be able to make informed decisions as to whether or not to continue with on-line counselling.

Professionals may constitute a ruling class that maintains the position of the powerful in our society (Smith, 1998, p. 3, p. 58). Professionals such as those related to law, health, education,

universities, sociology and the Church may give rise to institutionalized ways of knowing (Norton, 2002, p. 122; Shawver, 1999, p. 4; Smith, 1998, p. 77). Health and law are two institutions amongst many that may impact upon professionals who work with women offenders in the criminal justice system. "Institutional" practices may include a complex set of relationships that are constitutive of the ruling class (Smith, 1998, pp. 160-202). These relationships may be organized around a particular social function such as health, law and/or education (Tobey, 1998, p. 3). Institutional practices may be shaped through such elements as ideology, everyday processes, systems of classification and broader theories about society.

Offenders

Institutional practices may create barriers for counsellors and other mental health professionals who assist women offenders. In work with women offenders counsellors may face many challenges. Women offenders may be reluctant to enter into treatment even if they are able to access therapeutic programs (King, 1995, p. 1; Siegmund, 2003, p. 1). In work with offenders it is important to adjust interventions and treatments, such as on-line counselling to address the level of risk the offender is to herself and/or others. Offenders with special needs, such as women, may require programs and services that meet their particular needs such as group work, self-help networks, individual counselling and peer support (Fischer-Bloom, 1995, p.2).

Due to the relatively low number of women who are imprisoned in comparison to men, psychological and human service practice and informed risk assessment with these offenders is still developing (McLean 1995, p. 43; Siegmund, 2003, p. 1). Women offenders may well experience difficulties with emotional and mental health problems and may be particularly prone to depression and self-injurious behaviours (McLean, 1995, p. 44, p. 49). This and a lack of treatment could lead to problems for women when adjusting to life outside the prison. Before entering into on-line counselling with offenders it is important to undertake a risk assessment. Language used and diagnostic and risk assessment tools based upon male populations may be of limited value in work with women offenders and particularly Aboriginal women offenders (McLean, 1995, p. 45).

On-line counselling may be a useful new approach with some women offenders in some situations. These situations could include instances where women offenders may not have access to counselling otherwise, to supplement face-to-face counselling sessions and as a means to encourage offenders to ultimately seek face-to-face counselling (Fenichel, 2002b, p. 1). The International Society for Mental Health On-line (2003, p. 1) and Grohol (2001, p. 1) suggest that some women offenders may be unable to access assistance other than through on-line counselling. The role of on-line counselling as a potential new approach to assist professionals in their work with women offenders in the criminal justice system is currently unknown. ■

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Distance Learning and Synchronous Interaction

Joel Foreman

Suppose you are a distance instructor who wants to emulate the conventional “best practice” of face-to-face learning by dividing a class into autonomous work groups. You want your distance students to form 4- or 5-person teams whose collaborative, problem-based learning work requires brainstorming, planning, negotiation, problem solving, and document production. What are the best *readily available* tools to support these activities?

A likely starting point would be the familiar asynchronous communication tools (e-mail and threaded discussion) that have played a primary role in distance learning to date. At the very least, asynchrony allows those students with challenging work, family, or study schedules to do schoolwork at any time. Under the best circumstances, skillful online instructors have successfully designed, facilitated, and monitored e-mail exchanges and threaded discussions that produce reasonable learning benefits. We may conclude that such asynchronous tools are indeed powerful (in that they are major enablers of online instruction), but they are also primitive (in that their temporal delays significantly limit interactivity and efficient collaborative learning).

If instructors want to optimize the performance of learning teams working on complex problems, they will need to consider working with the speed and immediacy of synchronous (or same-time) communication. Based on the accelerating development of such systems, their deployment in the workplace, and my own work with them, I expect synchrony to become the mode of choice for collaborative, small-team forms of online learning. In this article, I review the benefits and disadvantages of diverse synchronous tools, with an ultimate emphasis on application sharing and voiceover IP (VOIP) as the most advantageous and promising combination for educators in the future.

Tools at the Top and Bottom

Video conferencing and chat, both part of the synchronous tools hierarchy, attempt to approximate face-to-face communication. Video conferencing is at the top of the hierarchy because it addresses both sight and sound, and it comes closest to reproducing the multi-sensorial experience of “presence.” Chat is at the bottom because it is the most removed from the audiovisual reality of face-to-face encounters.

Neither works especially well as a tool for collaborative team-work. Video conferencing is still too expensive for widespread use; it lags behind the broadcast standards to which we have been habituated and, even at its best, fails to capture many of the visual cues that make face-to-face the preferred work medium. Chat is slow; it forces users into an awkward, unfamil-

iar behavioural terrain when employed for complex intellectual work; and it benefits greatly from good writing and typing skills, which are not widely available. Chat has a deserved place in the panoply of online instructional tools, especially in the form of instant messaging, but why use it for complex team-learning work when better tools (e.g., voice conferencing and Web conferencing) are available?

Audio Only

The phone conference is highly effective for organizing small-team distance learning experiences, and as a communication mode, it is superior to both e-mail and chat. It plays to a skill set – phone talk – that we all have developed as members of a telephonic culture. Although students need to learn some protocols, they otherwise see the phone conference as an extension of their natural lives. Moreover, the phone conference provides immediacy, a high rate of information exchange, and complex multi-person interaction facilitated by a familiar audio cueing system.

Unfortunately, this tool gets expensive when one tallies the per minute/per person charges. One solution to this problem is to take advantage of the three-way calling option offered by most telecom providers (wireless included) in the United States. My students use Verizon’s three-way calling, which is provided to subscribers as a regular service for a small monthly charge, or for a \$0.75 (USD) single-use charge. Despite its name, four or more people can use the system at once.

My student teams regularly use phone conferencing to organize a series of assignments in a course on advanced business writing. Conference calls make it possible for the teams to efficiently analyze the workload, divide the duties, report progress, and change directions if necessary – all tasks that are performed over a number of weeks.

Despite its conveniences, the audio-only approach does have significant limitations. Taken by itself, it cannot enable the synchronous sharing and manipulation of artifacts (e.g., flow-charts, mind maps, Web pages, and memos) that help focus the cognitive synergies of a distributed team. The shortcomings of unassisted audio are most apparent in the document production phase of an assignment – when team members must jointly write, revise, edit, and polish a report.

Web Conferencing and Application Sharing

Web conferencing remedies these problems through a function, known as *application sharing*, that will become an important part of distance learning as the price point improves.

Typical Web conferencing systems (such as those provided by Genesys and Raindance) integrate the phone and networked

computer screen so that an unlimited number of participants can talk to each other while viewing the same content. For example, a distance learning team might collaboratively write and edit a document with Microsoft Word or collectively surf various Web sites to research a given topic. The audio element allows the team to coordinate, negotiate, and collaboratively manipulate whatever object (e.g., an Excel spreadsheet) appears on their screens. If one member proposes a change of any sort, the result can be viewed and evaluated simultaneously by all. The resulting cycle of instant action/reaction (the strength of good synchronous team work) allows team members to quickly complete tasks and build documents.

Accessing such a Web conference is simple. Participants obtain an 800 number, URL, and password; they then phone in for audio and login online to pull up a common page. Unfortunately, many students cannot meet the requirements associated with Web conferencing: the high cost due to per person/per minute charges as well as the need for a DSL line, two phone lines, or a phone line and a cable modem so that they can access the Internet while talking on the phone.

Voiceover IP

An alternative that is likely to mature in the near future is application sharing with voiceover IP (VOIP). These systems, which bypass the telephone and transmit audio over the same Internet lines that link users to their shared applications, are relatively simple to use. Participants in a conference typically communicate with the microphones and speakers installed on most computers; they need only to adjust the volume and balance controls before starting. Headsets work best because they free the hands for typing and using the mouse. Once a conference is underway, users simply interact as they would in a conventional phone conference.

A voice compression algorithm transforms the analog input (the speaker's voice) into a collection of digital packets (the same kind that carry all other traffic on the Internet), which then are routed over a variety of different lines to their destination. The technology is a brilliant exploitation of the Internet, but it has drawbacks that potential users need to recognize. Because the packets in a given message do not travel together, some of them may get lost, while others may arrive at different times for final assembly. The result can be noticeable delays in a VOIP conversation. Such undesirable latency effects may be worsened if the various participants are operating with different download speeds. A student working with a 56K modem or less, for example, will definitely introduce lag into a conversation with students using DSL or cable modems.

Compared to the telephonic standards we are accustomed to, voiceover IP is intrusive and clumsy for a couple of reasons. As noted, lag is one. Yet its effects are not so disruptive as to render communication impossible; students learning and working together over VOIP will simply need to lower their typical expectations of high fidelity and immediacy. Moreover,

the better and usually more expensive VOIP systems tend to alleviate lag with load-balancing devices that control the delivery of consecutive messages, thus simulating the spontaneous rhythm of face-to-face conversation. We can expect this to become the norm eventually, as the diffusion of broadband access continues and system developers learn how to lower the cost of latency alleviation.

The second consideration that potential users should keep in mind is the distinction between one-way and full duplex systems. One-way systems allow only one user at a time to speak, usually by mouse clicking a button on the graphical user interface (GUI). The next speaker must ascertain when the first has finished, and then vie with the others in the conversation to be the first to depress the audio button and begin talking. These are not insurmountable problems; they are merely features that students will need to anticipate if they are to appreciate the benefits of VOIP.

Groupware and the Virtual Classroom

The tool suites that incorporate VOIP are business-oriented groupware products like Groove and Documentum and pedagogical "virtual classrooms" like those offered by HorizonLive and Interwise. The groupware products contain many of the tools found in typical course management systems (e.g., file storage, whiteboards, threaded discussions, team spaces, and calendars), whereas the focus of the virtual classroom is synchronous teacher/student and student/student interaction. Although the GUIs of these respective tool suites reflect their different orientations, they are alike in that they both provide VOIP and application-sharing features. Consequently, both types of tool sets are able to support small learning teams who want the speed and efficiency of synchronous VOIP work sessions as well as the ability to conduct Web searches, review documents, and build documents collaboratively.

My own operational experience is with Groove, the brainchild of Lotus Notes innovator Ray Ozzie. The course design team that I work with uses Groove as the learning space for four-person student teams to develop their critical thinking skills. The students use either phone conferencing or Groove's VOIP to support two weekly online team meetings (each week for 4 weeks), during which they review and build a number of conceptual maps. The knowledge mapping tool that they use (MindManager) is a shared application that is embedded in Groove or can stand alone. By working online with a shared view of MindManager maps and an audio connection (either a conventional telephone conference or Groove's VOIP), the students orient themselves to the problem-solving mission, analyze and sequence the tasks they need to perform, organize who does what, perform metacognitive reflections, arrive at a solution, and produce a final report. Each of these phases is represented visually in and by MindManager.

Distance Learning continued from page 13

Joel Foreman

For example, in a course on collaborative critical thinking, the students must solve an information systems security problem. The schedule for the second week appears as a MindManager map and directs the students to conduct a series of MindManager Web conferences, first with two-student subteams and then with the whole team. During these conferences, they discuss and collaboratively build initial and goal state maps of the problem they must solve. The initial state map visualizes what students know about the problem. The goal state map represents what they are able to specify about a desired solution. In the following week, the students Web conference again, reflect upon the “gap” between the initial and goal state maps, and fill in the parts of a MindManager “gap analysis” map that organizes their problem-solving efforts for the rest of the course.

An instructor wishing to ease into this kind of synchronous learning work might start with Microsoft NetMeeting, a free tool that provides VOIP and application sharing and that is relatively easy to use. This well-reviewed product is now integrated with MSN Messenger, an instant messenger tool with a file share function. One might start down the road to synchronous learning by having student teams download, explore, and report on the tools themselves. This effort will produce a level

of comfort (for both instructors and students) that can serve as a foundation for more complex team learning efforts. Structured as a blend of individual work and synchronous collaboration, such experiences will help learners manage complex projects, perform collaborative research and writing, and solve difficult problems in much the same way that these tasks (increasingly) are handled in the so-called “real world” beyond academe.

As the efficiencies of high-speed networks transform the predigital structures of a place-based academe, we should expect to see many student teams using the kind of synchronous tools discussed above to self-manage the more complex learning tasks of higher education. VOIP and application sharing in particular can create inexpensive cyberspaces where geo-distributed students can perform their learning work through the preferred medium for intense communication – talk. Their talk will focus on shared screen objects (e.g., texts, spreadsheets, Web pages, and flowcharts) that facilitate the dialogue and that can be changed as the need arises. Under the best circumstances, the students will divide the work, perform it separately, and then gather online to share their findings and integrate them into a deliverable product that can be assessed by the instructor. This is the decentred classroom taken to a logical extreme by an emerging technology. ■

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Updates From the Field



What's New at Bow Valley College

Daph Crane
Instructional Designer, Learning Resource Services

Calgary Flight Training Centre is partnering with Bow Valley College to offer a unique learning opportunity for those who wish to become a professional pilot. Flight and technical training is completed in a traditional manner. Learners use e-learning to obtain skills in value added courses in areas such as Customer Service, Marketing, Supervisory Skills, Thinking Skills, Working with Others, Organizational Behaviour, and WHMIS. These courses have been adapted for participants in the Commercial Pilot Diploma Program. Several students have completed the first of three blocks of e-learning courses. Feedback on these courses has been positive.

With funding from Alberta Learning's Curriculum Redevelopment Fund, Bow Valley College is partnering with Lethbridge Community College and Access TV to create a series of short video clips to be used in the Practical Nursing program. Learners in traditional and e-learning delivery modes will use these video clips.

Production is being completed by a local production company with assistance from Bow Valley College and Lethbridge Community College.

Pam Lammiman in Health and Community Care, Bow Valley College is the subject matter expert for this project, identifying what needed to be in the videos to meet students' and instructors' needs, as well as ensuring correctness and quality of procedures. Darcy Rollack in the Learning Resource Services, Bow Valley College is the instructional designer. Daph Crane is managing the project.

Filming is complete and editing is in process. It is expected that the clips will be ready for use during the fall intake of the Practical Nurse Program.

For more information on either of these two projects, please contact Daph Crane (dcrane@bowvalleycollege.ca) or call 403-410-1655. ■



e-PD Expansion

Doug MacLachlan
Program Manager
Online Professional Development

e-PD has continued to expand, both in client base and program direction. Over 400 Course Completion Certificates were awarded this year to educators from a variety of jurisdictions and organizations including:

- Calgary Board of Education
- Calgary Catholic School District
- AADAC
- Red Deer College, Aurora College, Olds College, Chinook College
- Foothills School Division, Parkland School Division, Livingstone Range School Division
- Peace River School Division, Sunchild Cyber School, Students Online
- University College of the Cariboo
- Northwest Territories Education, Culture & Employment
- UNIVA University in Mexico.

The Calgary Board of Education and the University of Calgary are partnering to offer three half courses in the Graduate Division of Educational Research. Educators may choose to take CBE e-PD courses for elective credit in the Graduate Division of Educational Research (GDER). Each course described below is a half-course equivalent and can be

taken as part of the PDCL program at the University of Calgary. The following three courses may be taken as part of the requirements for the GDER Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma or Masters Degree:

EDER 679.06 Designing Web-Based Instruction

Fall 2003

Teaching & Learning Online +
Distributed Learning Shell Builder +
U of C Course Work

EDER 679.16 Designing Web-Based Instruction II

Winter 2004

e-Valuator +
e-Designer +
U of C Course Work

EDER 679.26 Designing Web-Based Instruction III

Spring 2004

e-Coder +
Mult-e-Media +
U of C Course Work

For those who are not interested in graduate credit, the six e-PD courses may be taken to earn the **Calgary Board of Education Teaching and Learning Online Certificate**. For more information, including the full 2003-2004 course schedule, please visit www.cbe.learn.ca. ■

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Updates From the Field



E-volution @ LCC

Leona Rousseau

Program Leader, Interior Design & Merchandising

“A learning environment evolving to meet the needs of learners, instructors, business and industry.”

Lethbridge Community College (LCC) is attentive to the technological advances in business and industry and is dedicated to preparing graduates with the requisite knowledge and skills in a learner-centred environment. Training, teaching and learning practices are also rapidly changing in light of new communication technologies. The Centre for Agriculture, Trades and Technologies contains several technology intensive programs and continues to incorporate the latest software and hardware into its curriculum to enhance teaching, learning, and graduate employability. With these objectives in mind, the Centre has launched its pilot initiative e-volution. E-volution represents next generation teaching and learning. It means greater access to essential technologies, learning materials and individuals for instructors and learners alike.

Through e-volution, learners in specified programs will rent high-powered laptop computers, complete with software, from LCC. Faculty members in those programs will also be equipped with laptops and software permitting increased flexibility in and outside of the classroom. In addition to software, technical support,

and on-campus training sessions will be provided for learners. Learners will be able to access the LCC campus network and their coursework from numerous locations including designated classrooms, meeting areas, lounges and corridors. Laptops will be used extensively but not exclusively. Classroom teaching and learning methods vary and are based on how appropriate they are for the individual course or lesson content. Instructors will determine when and where laptops will be used in class. Some programs and courses may use the Internet and WebCT for full or partial course delivery, extending the advantages of learner laptop use.

Programs

Beginning Fall 2003 students enrolled in the following programs will be required to rent a laptop computer from LCC:

- Interior Design & Merchandising
- Engineering Design and Drafting Technology
- Civil Engineering Technology
- Geomatics Engineering Technology
- Manufacturing Process Technology

Check the LCC website for additional e-volution information in the months ahead or contact:

**Peter LeClaire at: (403) 320-3436 or
peter.leclaire@lethbridgecollege.ab.ca ■**



Academic Technologies for Learning

Cheryl Whitelaw
Special Projects Coordinator

Academic Technologies for Learning and Partners Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers (CANDO) Gateway to Learning Program CANDO offers programming and support to people working in Aboriginal economic development across Canada. The Gateway to Learning pilot project is intended to increase the ability of Economic Development Officers (EDOs) to access community economic development education through the use of learning technologies. The program also intends to develop and facilitate the growth of an online community of individuals interested in Aboriginal economic development and to assess and adapt online distance delivery technologies and instructional techniques to meet the learning needs of Aboriginal EDOs across Canada.

The Gateway to Learning course is an orientation to the certification requirements for EDOs and a blend of online,

distance educational and communication technologies. The course was offered using a binder and CD-ROM of course materials, an online web board discussion, weekly audio-conferences and resource sharing and e-mail through an Extranet network. Academic Technologies for Learning has worked with CANDO to assess the pilot implementation of this program. Participants noted that the program was "...an innovative approach to learning and acquiring accreditation for past work experience." ■

For more information about the project, contact:

Veronica Vinge
vvinge@edo.ca

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Technology Enhanced Learning Team at Lakeland College

Colleen Priest
Communications Co-ordinator

In just under three years, the Technology Enhanced Learning Team (TELT) at Lakeland College has grown from a single project to a diverse palette of projects that represent all six Schools of Learning at the College. TELT's mandate is to undertake specified technology enhanced learning projects, and do so in a manner that provides quantitative and qualitative data for use by Lakeland College's Executive Team in their planning process. It is a unit devoted to the development, use, and tracking of technology enhanced learning at the College.

The six-member team included the TELT Coordinator/Instructional Systems Designer, an Instructional Designer, an Applications Specialist, an Editor/Technical Writer, a Technology Enhanced Learning Assistant, and a Data Entry Clerk. Additional team members are drawn from faculty at the College for specific projects.

TELT's "Irons in the Fire"

Firefighter and paramedic training is taking new form, as components of Emergency Services Training (EST) are newly re-modeled by TELT for on-line delivery by **fire etc.** TELT completed the development of 51 modules in both print and web-based format that cover the National Fire Protection Association 1001 Standard for Professional Fire Fighters (levels I and II), NFPA 472 Dangerous Goods (Awareness level), Building Construction and Fire Behaviour.

Funding from HRDC's OLT secured evaluation for the 51 redeveloped theory modules, across four delivery modes – using print and web-based modules at both on-site and remote sites. The results from this project, titled "Evaluating Multimodal Computer-based Firefighter Training", were presented at the recent Interface 2003 Conference, and will be available from the Lakeland College website by the summer's end.

The School of Trades and Technology benefits from a series of on-line test banks in TLM that includes approximately 15,000 questions in four trades. In addition to creating and maintaining the online test banks and testing systems, TELT also designed a promotional CD-ROM for the School of Trades and Technology, and redeveloped their website. TELT has also produced a print and web-based staff, student, and continuing education WHMIS course that includes on-line testing.

TELT is grounded in the Instructional Design principle of Multi-Directional Transformative Income Generation, and applies this approach, in partnership with the School of Business, to developing 30 online modules of curriculum for the Bachelor of Applied Emergency Services Administration degree. Each module is approximately 15 hours in length and includes specific learning objectives that are cross-referenced to Lakeland College's prior learning assessment and recognition system for use in other programs and by other organizations.

TELT is designing and developing training programs in conjunction with Keyspan Energy Canada and a consortium of petroleum industry partners, so that individuals employed in the petroleum industry can apply their validated competencies to obtain industry-recognized standardized certification through Lakeland College.

Initial positive feedback from the on-line Animal Reproduction course has encouraged the School of Agricultural Sciences to pursue further development of on-line courses, with a ten module, web-based Agricultural Math course, to be followed by another in Agricultural Economics. TELT is working closely with the Agricultural Sciences Subject Matter Expert on this course to redevelop the initial print course in such a way as to increase the student success rate through the use of design principles not applied to the original course design.

The School of Health and Human Services is also taking advantage of the instructional design expertise in TELT, by completing a course content review and redesign of several first year courses for its popular Community Care certificate and Community Rehabilitation diploma programs, in preparation for these courses to be brokered to outside organizations for their professional development purposes.

Recent international attention to Lakeland College's Interior Design Technology program has prompted the School of Liberal and Performing Arts to redevelop a course in interior finishes for online and CD-based delivery. This course will be available in the fall of 2004 to both credit and non-credit students. ■



myFaculty Resource Centre

Judy P. Adams
Manager, EnCana e-Learning Centre

In November 2002, SAIT announced the implementation of a digital infrastructure to better connect people, content and technology. The decision to pursue a more collaborative environment with the use of technology was necessary to keep up with the heavy demands of the Academic Division. Through team discussions and department joint efforts, the EnCana e-Learning Centre concluded that instructors needed reachable resources available to them at all times. A White Paper on Virtual Space Planning (2001) developed by the Centre for Learning, identified that SAIT's instructor support services needed to be systematic. Information on resources, curriculum development, professional growth, and course delivery could be more easily accessible. To better facilitate these concerns, a project steering committee was formed to pinpoint the issues.

The team consists of individuals from various academic branches and support services, tasked with creating a "one-stop shopping" model. Their main objective is to work towards providing improved learning skills development, flexibility and better positioning for instructors as a teaching community. Based on the following criteria, the team expects to launch phase one of the myFaculty site mid August 2003.

Vision

The myFaculty Resource Centre will be the primary virtual site to connect people, information and ideas for optimizing faculty potential in teaching and learning.

Mission

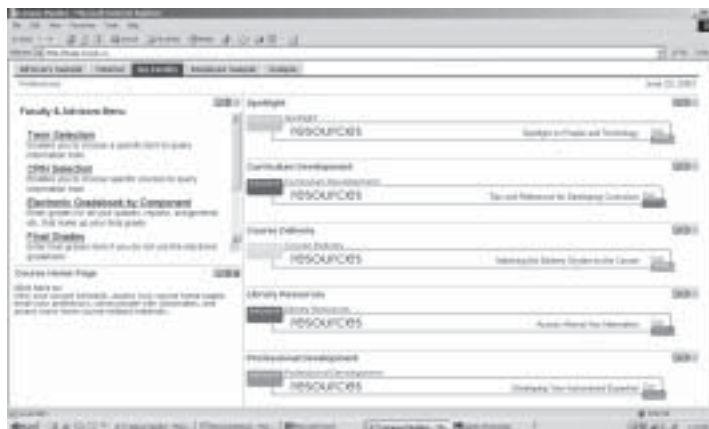
To build a globally recognized learning community and facility, enabling faculty to:

- Access teaching and learning knowledge resources and tools for use and reuse in development and delivery of learning, and for personal and academic development needs.
- Gain access to a physical and virtual facility which serves as a "hub" for faculty to work together with training development and delivery staff in the CfL.
- Showcase best practices in people, content and technology practices, procedures and principles for learning.
- Facilitate and be part of an online group/s to create their own Communities of Learning.

Objectives

In order to achieve its goals, the virtual site will focus on four key areas:

- a) Knowledge resources and tools
- b) Learning links to internal and external sources
- c) People and technology showcase



- d) A collaborative work environment to build a community of learning

The objectives of the Centre for Learning mirror these four areas of focus:

- Provide tools and knowledge resources which support learning. Maintain them so they are current and relevant. This includes resources such as knowledge libraries, learning links, current news and reports, journal articles, books and audio-visual.
- Provide just-in-time training and coaching for resources and tools through online tutorials and a drop-in centre.
- Showcase people and best practices in learning from internal and external sources, to promote integration into Sait's best practices.
- Showcase current and emerging learning technologies that offer potential efficiencies.
- Develop relationships with target groups to utilize collaborative physical and virtual work spaces.
- Moderate discussions and forums to build on the knowledge base to support learning. Align and embed results into knowledge management and best practice.

Instructors can look forward to seeing more online resources available to them ranging from real time forums to advice on enhancing curriculum delivery through the new myFaculty Resource Centre. In addition, this virtual site will provide access to just- in- time training and coaching to improve course instruction. SAIT anticipates the rollout of this new resource will lead to a stronger developmental environment where faculty can explore the use of technology in teaching and learning. The project steering committee anticipates connecting with a strong user group that serves our growing number of students to lead the way to an advantageous learning experience.

SAIT's ultimate goal by incorporating these initiatives is to significantly increase resources to our Faculty, and to make these resources available 24 hours a day. ■

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Updates From the Field



The Learning Commons

Anne Culnan
Instructional Design / Evaluation Consultant



The Learning Commons is a resource centre providing guidance, support and facilitation. Workshops, seminars, lectures and training sessions, expose faculty, staff and graduate students to teaching & learning theory and practice. All facets of course design, development, and evaluation, are addressed across the educational spectrum from traditional face-to-face to technology-mediated distance delivery. On-going consultation services and support relate to classroom instruction including technology integration with Learning and Course Management Systems (LCMS) such as WebCT® and Blackboard®. The Learning Commons also manages various e-learning facilities and distance education services including videoconferencing, audio-conferencing, and CentraOne live WebCAST sessions for synchronous discussion and conferencing.

The Learning Commons, as the University of Calgary's Teaching and Learning Centre, plays a prominent role in support of the strategic direction and vision of the University's academic and institutional learning plans, with a commitment to a culture of research and inquiry.

Under the direction of Dr. D. R. Garrison, the Learning Commons provides advocacy and promotion of Blended Learning (the best of e-learning resources and teaching practice), Curriculum Redesign, Knowledge Management, and an 'Inquiry-Based' Learning model for its *communities* of 'Inquiry' and 'Practice'.

This summer, the **Learning Commons** is pleased to welcome educators and administrators across North America, to its annual Faculty Development Institute—"Teaching Reflections 2003". The theme of the two-day conference is '**Reflective Inquiry**', as it will support post secondary instructors in creating meaningful learning environments through critical thinking and reflective inquiry. Keynote speakers include the distinguished scholars in higher educational research, Dr.

Stephen Brookfield (University of St. Thomas, MN) and Dr. Janet Donald (McGill University). Dr. Brookfield will present on the topic of "Becoming a Critically Reflective Adult Educator", and Dr. Donald will present on the topic of "Higher Order Learning and Student Strategies to Achieve It". Other sessions will address a variety of topics including 'Deep and Surface Learning', 'Mentoring New Faculty', 'Managing Small Group Discussions', 'Online Course Design & Development', 'Teaching Large Classes', 'Using a Case Study Approach in Higher Education', 'Reflecting on Our BIASEs in Teaching', and more. This event will provide opportunities for networking amongst peers, engaging in meaningful discussion, reflecting upon topics of personal interest, and informing practice. A program brochure as well as other conference details can be downloaded from the conference Website: <http://commons.ucalgary.ca/tr3>. We look forward to seeing you at the University of Calgary's 'Teaching Reflections 2003' Conference on August 20th and 21st. ■

For additional Teaching Reflections 2003 conference information, please contact:

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Important links:

- *Teaching Reflections 2003* Faculty Development Summer Institute: <http://commons.ucalgary.ca/tr3>
- *Learning Commons' Website*: <http://commons.ucalgary.ca>
- *The Teaching Exchange*: The Learning Commons' newsletter (please contact mjleeder@ucalgary to obtain a copy).



SAIT to host Interface 2004

Please contact the Conference Chair to volunteer or for details:

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