What’s New at Online Instruction?

---Professor Catheryn Cheal, Online Instruction

WebCT 4. Online Instruction and ITR upgraded WebCT over the summer from version 3.6 to 4.0. Improvements include an equation editor, an html editor, a browser checker, and an improved interface making uploading files, in particular, much easier. Log-in is different as well. You and your students will now use a CSUN email accounts as login and password to access WebCT. All new instructions, especially for student self-enrollment, were necessary and may be accessed at: http://www.csun.edu/~webteach/WebCTHelp.html

Coming soon--Tech Fair! Mark your calendars for Nov. 14. We'll have vendors, food, best practices, and stipend announcements.

Program Stipends. The Office of Online Instruction offered two stipends last spring to be awarded for Fall 2003 courses. Information about the GE (completely online) stipend and the Share the Space (half online) stipend is at: http://www.csun.edu/~webteach/stipends.html

Student Survey. In an effort to further understand our students desire for online courses and to see if our support services are working for them, please tell your students about the student survey posted at: http://www.csun.edu/~webteach/online

Welcome back from a, hopefully, restful summer. Feel free to contact me at ccheal@csun.edu or Randal Cummings at rcummings@csun.edu or Ken Stuart at kps1@csun.edu or Kate Berggren at kate.berggren@csun.edu for any help you might need with online teaching.

Supplemental Online Courses--Art History 433

---Professor Kenon Breazeale, Art Department

Studying art history always has involved the need to memorize images. And a real challenge in teaching art history is determining how to provide study images for students. Over the years, I have seen (and tried) all kinds of solutions: students sketching as they take notes, periodic slide reviews, requiring knowledge only of illustrations in the textbook, etc. I never found a satisfactory solution until Online Instruction offered the opportunity to put images online.

In 1999 with a Judge Julian Beck award, Dr. Cheal introduced CSUN art history faculty to the potential of putting study images online by creating the Lightbox Project, named in memory of a wildly unsuccessful experiment wherein study slides were placed in a locked box with a light in it. Imagine 50 students elbowing each other to study one-inch square slide images. Interested faculty were tutored in scanning slides using Photoshop and uploading the scanned images to WebCT course-pages linked from the Lightbox Project website. Learning the technology was difficult, but when I finally got a set of slides up for one course, the students’ incredible gratitude inspired me to keep going. I now have slides up for three courses and will be doing a fourth this semester.

Continued on p. 4 K. Breazeale
Online GE Program— Physics of Music 305 OL

---Professor David Bach, Department of Physics and Astronomy

Physics 305, The Physics of Music, as taught in the classroom, is made up of lectures, lecture demonstrations in a regular classroom, and experiments carried out in a Mac computer lab, with two core computer programs—Sound Edit 16 for synthesis and Canary, a sound analysis program. For the online version the students were required to have the computer programs installed on their own computers at home. This was done by choosing programs which offered a license for single semester use, which made the cost reasonable.

I had the students work on an “experiment” each week to make up for the individual contact in the classroom. They were required to submit a written report by email on the experiment by 8:00 p.m. each Monday. The experiments consisted of synthesizing and analyzing sounds in order to demonstrate relevant physics concepts. The students were required to do a considerable amount of writing in the weekly reports (average was about 300 words plus graphs) and the final project, which is another plus for the course. This greatly exceeds the 2500 word requirement for GE students at CSUN. The reports were graded and returned to the students by e-mail. I asked the students to resubmit portions that were not correct and sometimes this went through several iterations. I found that there was an intimacy in contact that was better online than face to face, particularly for the students with less preparation. Some students seemed to be much more open online.

We had two chat sessions running from 8:00 - 9:00 PM every Monday and Tuesday. The students were supposed to attend one of these chats. WebCT automatically kept a record of the attendance at the chats and also a complete record of the chat sessions. I found that the chat sessions were most useful when I asked the students to have copies of the figures for the week’s assignment available at the chat. Also, using the material as a basis of discussion in the chats provided a reinforcement and a means of clearing up misunderstood concepts.

I think the online course is appropriate for students who have no physics in their education. It also seems to work for physics students who have no music background. A major requirement of the course, the final project, permits a wide range in ability. The students were required to use the sound synthesis and sound synthesis software for research for a final report on some aspect of their own choosing on sound or music. The students produced an intriguing variety of reports related to sound or music. It was exciting to receive and examine these “mini-research” project reports as they came to me on the due date. I was, in fact, pleased and surprised at the variety and quality of most of these reports. It was a challenging and exciting experience and shows that this novel way of teaching physics seems to work.
FALL 2003 FACULTY
WORKSHOP SCHEDULE
The Office of Undergraduate Studies and Online Instruction are sponsoring Faculty Computer Workshops in order to facilitate online teaching and learning.
To make a reservation, signup at:
http://www.csun.edu/~webteach/workshops.html. We have room for 12 participants. All workshops will be in the Faculty Lab, Sierra Hall, Room 422. Any of the workshops may be taken individually and assume no prior knowledge.
IMPORTANT! You must have a CSUN email account to attend the WebCT workshops. Plan on acquiring this at least 5 days prior to the workshops at: https://www.csun.edu/account

Calendar
WEBCT SERIES I
LEARN A COURSEWARE PRODUCT, CONTAINING 20 ONLINE TEACHING TOOLS.
DATES AND TIMES:
1. INTRODUCTION TO WEBCT
TUES. SEPT. 9, 2 TO 3:00PM
2. WEBCT DISCUSSION AND CHAT
TUES. SEPT. 16, 2 TO 3:00PM
3. WEBCT QUIZZES AND GRADING
TUES. SEPT. 23, 2 TO 3:00PM
4. WEBCT CONTENT AND FILES
TUES. SEPT. 30, 2 TO 3:00PM
5. WEBCT ADDITIONAL TOOLS
TUES. OCT. 7, 2 TO 3:00PM

OR WEBCT SERIES II
DATES AND TIMES:
1. INTRODUCTION TO WEBCT
MON. OCT. 20, 2 TO 3:00PM
2. WEBCT DISCUSSION AND CHAT
MON. OCT. 27, 2 TO 3:00PM
3. WEBCT QUIZZES AND GRADING
MON. NOV. 3, 2 TO 3:00PM
4. WEBCT CONTENT AND FILES
MON. NOV. 10, 2 TO 3:00PM
5. WEBCT ADDITIONAL TOOLS
MON. NOV. 17, 2 TO 3:00PM

COPYRIGHT AND ONLINE INSTRUCTION
BY KEN STUART
(NOT A HANDS-ON-WORKSHOP)
THURS. SEPT. 18, 2 TO 3:00PM

FLASHLIGHT
LEARN HOW TO USE AN ONLINE SURVEY PROGRAM
TUES. OCT. 14, 2 TO 3:00PM

IMAGES
CAPTURE, EDIT, AND DISPLAY ONLINE IMAGES AND PHOTOSHOP
THUR. OCT. 16, 2 TO 3:00PM

INTRO. TO ARCView
A BASIC INTRODUCTION TO THE GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM
THUR. OCT. 16, 3 TO 4PM

INTERMEDIATE ARCView
UPLOADING DATA INTO A GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM.
THUR. OCT. 30, 3 TO 4PM

POWERPOINT
ENLIVEN YOUR LECTURES WITH CHARTS, PHOTOS, AND ANIMATION.
FRI. OCT. 24, 2 TO 3:00PM

POWERPOINT ADV. TECHNIQUES
ADD SOUND, EQUATIONS, & MASTER PAGES TO YOUR POWERPOINT FILES. SAVE IN HTML AND UPLOAD TO THE INTERNET.
FRI. NOV. 7, 2 TO 3:00PM

WEB-PAGE MAKING—NETSCAPE COMPOSER
CREATE A WEBPAGE IN AN HTML EDITOR
THUR. OCT. 30, 2-3:00PM

TECHNOLOGICAL STRATEGIES FOR TRADITIONAL TEACHING/LEARNING PROBLEMS
OFFERED THROUGH CELT
( NOT A HANDS-ON-WORKSHOP)
TUES. NOV. 4, 12:30-2:00PM

New On-line Teaching Tools
---Ken Stuart, ITR Online Teaching Consultant

During the 2002-2003 academic year, we developed some database-driven, web-based tools that instructors may find useful to incorporate into their online classes or websites. We encourage you to try them out and begin using them, and we welcome feedback and suggestions for improvement in all cases.

All of these tools can be accessed from http://www.csun.edu/~webteach/tools.html at the bottom of the page.

One-click Webpage Password Protection
This tool allows anyone to set password protection on their CSUN web server site. With only one or two mouse clicks, entire directories can now be password protected. Instead of going through a tedious, arcane process to set up protection for copyrighted or private files on the website, everyone now has an easy-to-use option to restrict access to specific individuals or members of the CSUN community.

StoryBoard
The StoryBoard software allows students to post long stories for classmates and instructors to comment on. The stories and comments can be searched, and links make it easy to display all stories and comments made by a given student.

Image Database
This database give instructors the ability to create online slideshows using digital images. Instructors upload images and fill out various fields such as title, artist, and date to provide information for students to study. Images may be shared by instructors and a bulletin board may be activated for each slideshow to encourage students to discuss the images. Dates may be set to make the slideshows available.
Online Solutions for Face-to-Face Classroom Problems

---Professor Catheryn Cheal, Online Instruction

After over 25 years of teaching in the traditional classroom lecture mode, I've encountered the following student learning problems and implemented these online solutions to counteract them.

1. **Poor writing**

   Student writing can markedly improve in one semester if large amounts are required by assigning weekly or every other week postings to an online bulletin board. The competitive spirit will take over when students are required to respond to each other's work and they begin to model their writing on the best examples of the class. Grading may be as simple as skimming the posting and assigning a check or check minus to be effective.

2. **Low reading rates**

   "Why read a textbook if everything will be covered in a lecture?" This student attitude can wreak havoc on the hoped-for class discussion. Online quizzes on the reading material, due a day before the class, can increase student reading rates dramatically. Students find the immediate feedback satisfying and, once constructed, it's easy for the faculty since objective quizzes are automatically graded by the software and scores dropped into an online gradebook. Quizzes can be randomized with different students offered different questions.

3. **Low discussion participation**

   Online discussion groups, whether in online chat or a bulletin board, provide an anonymity from the usual social barriers of in-class presence. This allows all students, regardless of gender, personality type, and background to participate equally, although participation should be graded with at least a check or check-minus to be effective.

4. **Absences**

   Low attendance, due to sickness, parking problems, long commutes, and overbooked schedules seriously affect learning in the classroom. Learning can continue anytime with required asynchronous online methods like graded bulletin boards or internet research projects.

5. **Too little student contact**

   Chat office hours and email allow students and faculty to access each other from anywhere and anytime. Whole-class chat sessions provide students and faculty with the illusion that they are speaking one-on-one and community develops as students speak more freely with one another.

Having study slides available online is a wonderful teaching aid. It solves the problem of needing to correlate course content with textbooks and textbook illustrations and it lets me include ephemeral material such as current advertising. Students truly appreciate being able to study slides online. They can study when and where they like, which lessens their considerable anxiety about learning images. Moreover, the format allows students to view slides in thumbnail or full screen size; one works best for memorizing and the other for really studying an image.

My positive experience with the Lightbox Project has (somewhat) alleviated my technophobia, and I am now in the process of learning Powerpoint.