Facebook as a Pedagogical Tool

Facebook is a social networking site that today serves over 64 million active users, with an average of 250,000 new registrations per day since January of last year. While students generally embrace the new medium for communication, faculty and administration have mixed feelings about their presence on/in Facebook, especially when it comes to interacting with students.

The Chronicle of Higher Education ran an article last summer, entitled “Should Professors Use Facebook?” and many professors have been pondering the same question. Yet even the ambivalent are logging on and testing the water, and trying to divine the rules of the game – as evinced by the popularity of groups such as Faculty Ethics on Facebook. This particular Facebook group is 244 members strong and offers guidelines like never “friend requesting” students, but allowing them to initiate a connection. “Friend” is the name given to your virtual connections with other users, whether or not the term is accurately descriptive of your relationship in the material world). Indeed, Facebook isn’t just for friends, or even friends in the Facebook sense – many prospective employers will review public profiles, and even a university scholarship committee makes use of the profiles as part of the review process (Amy Ginther, OIT Podcast, March 2007).

As online social networking becomes increasingly pervasive, Teaching and Learning News interviewed one professor who’s embracing the technology and using it to extend the classroom communications. Dr. Jennifer Golbeck is Assistant Professor in the College of Information Studies who has found several advantages to an academic foray into Facebook.

“Facebook” continued on page 10
Learning is an active process that can be facilitated through the use of student academic products. Academic products include quizzes, tests, papers, participation, presentations, and class projects. In today’s digitally connected world, student products no longer need to be solely based on traditional papers and other written work. The ability of various digital platforms for documentation and presentation of student work allows increased flexibility and creativity for both the teacher and the student. A number of faculty, programs, and courses have been experimenting with a simple, easy to learn and use, electronic presentation tool, KEEP Toolkit.

KEEP Toolkit was developed, by The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching Knowledge Media Lab (KML), as a free open-source web-based presentation tool. It was launched in 2002 as part of the CASTL Carnegie Scholars project(http://www.carnegiefoundation.orgPrograms/index.asp?key=21) as a means to document faculty work. It quickly became an international tool for the documentation of faculty scholarship and as a tool for facilitating student learning in a variety of classes. Currently there are over 100,000 snapshots on the KML from more than 30,000 KML registered users representing every type of educational institution nationally and internationally. Snapshots are the digital product that the user produces. You are encouraged to visit the KEEP Toolkit sites and spend some time browsing to see the many uses and institutions that have adopted this tool.

The University of Maryland was one of the first universities to receive a site license allowing the tool to be hosted locally. The UMD KEEP Toolkit site (http://www.keep.umd.edu/static/index.html) is a minor image of the site at the Carnegie Foundation KML (http://www.cfkeep.org/static/index.html). The UMD site requires you to login using your LDAP University ID and does not allow self-registration. To obtain a UMD KEEP Toolkit account you need to contact us at CTE.

As one of the original six Carnegie Scholars who were the faculty guinea pigs who tested the concept and tool in its earliest days, I immediately saw the great potential this tool has as a simple but powerful teaching device for all types of classes. The attributes that make this tool so useful include the following:

- It requires no knowledge of digital languages or codes beyond using a word-processor and understanding how to find a file on a local drive and upload it to the site. On numerous occasions I have been able to teach faculty how to use KEEP Toolkit in 20 minutes, and they have had their first snapshot up within a couple of hours. For students, it is generally sufficient to simply provide the proper URL and explain how to login. Their familiarity with commercial media like Facebook and Myspace has provided adequate training to allow them to immediately navigate and use KEEP Toolkit. KEEP Toolkit handles all digital media including text, PDF files, HTML code, audio files, and video files.

- It uses a Dashboard interface, which provides the user with a simple, easy to understand, menu set for the various functions.

- It is adaptable and flexible and as such can be used for presentation of student projects, step-wise development for student learning of a specific task (e.g., a lab report, poster, etc.) and can be adapted for use as a simple portfolio tool to track and document student learning/development within a course or program of study.

- It is secure in that the author controls the level of access to her/his materials, from being only visible
Novel Uses of Clickers: Student Response Devices in the Humanities

by David Eubanks, Assistant Director, CTE

For some time, most of us have assumed that clickers’ native place is the large lecture, generally, and the STEM course, specifically.

After a few years of speculating about clickers in humanities courses, I made them part of my English 241: Introduction to the Novel this past fall. I am happy to report that they seem to have helped me meet two objectives.

Making Arguments

This course requires significant reading and writing, and the latter depends on the ability to fashion a thoughtful (and interesting) thesis statement. I require regular one-page short response papers, a three- to four-page paper, and an end-of-semester eight-page paper. As I assigned the first substantial paper, it became clear that many of my students were having difficulty articulating good thesis statements. My response was to use clickers in the following way.

I began class with a slide that outlined a few characteristics of strong (“effective” is the description we used) thesis statements. The next slide offered a sample thesis and asked students to indicate with their clickers whether it was effective or ineffective for the assignment. Students voted and, following Mazur’s think, pair, share model, discussed their choices with a neighboring peer before voting a second time. Predictably, the second vote led to a better aggregate response. We repeated this exercise with more sample thesis statements. I then asked small groups to devise their own thesis statements (with some guidelines; e.g., these statements must address two of the works we had read to date). Those who have taught writing or devoted course time to writing know that collaborative writing can be a remarkably difficult task. I acknowledged this with the class and observed that collaboratively developing thesis statements fell a little outside of our work. After groups had finished that exercise, I projected each thesis for the class and repeated the first exercise of voting, discussing, and voting again, this time allowing extemporaneous revision to thesis statements in order to make them more effective (that was, after all, the objective).

My inclination is to see value in a few ways, here. First, thesis statements are—at least in this situation—written. It was important that students wrestled with a very specific claim arrested in written language and projected on a screen, as opposed to the ephemera of class discussion, in which remarks often lose their precision and are forgotten moments after their utterance. Second, and paradoxically, I wanted to be able to allow the group to edit these statements, something we would be unable to do with handouts. Finally, as each vote was cast, I was able to (very loosely and without studied care, admittedly) assess the group’s proficiency with thesis statements. That last point persuades me that this is better than simply using the chalkboard, though we took that approach in a later class.

Assessing the Course

My second use of clickers invited students to assess the course. Be-
because these clickers were not identified with individual students, the feedback was anonymous. I used clickers because it seemed important to structure a group evaluation exercise; when students are told on the first day of class that the group is a temporary intellectual community, it is critical to me that the last day of class should acknowledge the group as such, even if only a gesture.

And so students were asked to answer questions about how much of each novel had actually been read (these responses were occasionally surprising and often disheartening), how many hours were spent preparing for this class per week (too few), whether students believed that they had achieved the course’s learning outcomes (simultaneously projected on-screen), whether students were applying skills learned in this course to reading for other courses, and how much reading students expected to do in the upcoming calendar year. When asked whether the course was “intellectually challenging,” 96% responded that it was, and when asked how its intellectual challenge compared to their other courses, 80% clicked that it was more challenging—a rewarding figure, until we reflect on the fact that 80% of the group claimed to have spent between one and six hours preparing for this class each week, and nearly 60% indicated that they spent more time on this course than any other.

These are the roughest of numbers, collected without much rigor, but they led to meaningful discussion as they were collected. Our discussion of the fact that nearly 60% admitted to not completing a novel about which each student was required to write in her final paper was less than comfortable. It also contributed to my reading of those papers.

The group was able to participate and observe a real-time evaluation of the course, of peers’ work, and of the perceived sustainability of what had been learned. A pen-and-paper version of this would have provided me with results, and a show-of-hands discussion would have approximated the portrait of the class we saw; however, using clickers founded a valuable reflective discussion with quantifiable feedback, and it left me with a bit of data that will certainly shape plans for my next course.

One more thing. It is noteworthy that my implementation of clickers was limited. These two small projects (I confess that a third attempt did not work because I was unprepared for a technical problem) did not require students to purchase clickers, and though their work on the thesis statement exercise contributed to class participation grades, I did not attach any grading mechanism via the clicker software. These were, in other words, low-stakes (at least from the students’ perspective; the stakes were high for me during the course evaluation!).

Try Clickers for a Day

Are you interested in the student response devices known as clickers? CTE has a loaner program. You can borrow a set of radio frequency (RF) clickers and a laptop equipped with the RF receiver which makes any classroom with an LCD projector a clicker classroom.

For more information about classroom response technology, visit http://www.clickers.umd.edu, see the November-December 2005 issue of Teaching & Learning News, or contact CTE at cte@umd.edu.
Outcomes from the 2007 Summer Institute on Teaching and Learning with New Technologies

by Caroline Egan, Summer Technology Institute Coordinator

Last summer, CTE, with support from the Office of the Dean for Undergraduate Studies and the Office of Technology Information, piloted a three-day institute for faculty interested in enhancing teaching and student learning through the use of pedagogies that involved new technologies. The Summer Institute produced several new pedagogical initiatives that enhanced the classroom experience and learning for both students and instructors and paved the way for further educational innovations using new technologies. The purpose of the institute was to introduce faculty members to the wide array of instructional technologies available to them at UMD – such as ELMS (Blackboard), clickers, wikis, and KEEP Toolkit – which they could then integrate into their fall courses. One of the goals of this pilot program was to make it a collaborative, year-long community of practice that included opportunities for continued group dialogue beyond the initial three-day training session. To that end, participants met twice during the fall semester to discuss their challenges and successes with these technologies. This spring, faculty members will share their experiences with a larger audience at the annual Innovations in Teaching and Learning Conference (http://www.oit.umd.edu/twt/) held on campus.

This program involved technological initiatives across several disciplines, including American Studies, English, French, Japanese and Kinesiology. While participants were eager to learn about a variety of technologies, many were particularly interested in the pedagogical possibilities of ELMS. Faculty from the English Department used ELMS for a variety of purposes. Professor Linda Kauffman used the program to digitally store a large collection of classroom resources, such as articles, visual texts, and selected readings. Professor Laura Rosenthal was interested in exploring ELMS as both a repository of visual resources and an in-class workshop tool, and Professor Jonathan Auerbach experimented with the ELMS discussion board and used the program for on-line quizzes.

The foreign language faculty explored how technologies could help students improve their fluency and practice their writing skills. Professor Andrea Frisch of the French and Italian Department used a wiki to create a collaborative on-line environment in her upper-level French course, to give students practice in writing French as well as editing peers’ work. Miki Kashima of the Japanese Department posted audio and text files on ELMS using the Wimba tool so that her intermediate students could practice composing full sentences in Japanese using auditory prompts outside the classroom.
Over the winter break, more than thirty graduate students participated in CTE’s third annual Teaching Portfolio Retreats. During the three-day retreats GTAs wrote and workshoped their teaching philosophies, and created teaching portfolios, as well as e-portfolios using Keep Toolkit. To find out more about graduate programs offered by CTE visit http://www.cte.umd.edu/programs/graduate/index.html.

To view more photos visit our gallery!
“KEEP Toolkit” continued from page 2
to the author to publication with a choice of copyright on the Internet. Another useful feature is that the snapshot can be sent as a read-only file to anyone via email or can be shared as modifiable file with others on the same KEEP Toolkit site.

One of the most useful features for course use is that the instructor can predetermine a template that lays out the format and content for assigned student work. This helps to ensure a level of consistency and uniformity across student products and greatly facilitates grading of student work. When the template is coupled with a grading rubric both students and faculty have a clear understanding of expectations.

A second useful feature is the ability to connect (stitch) individual student snapshots together, thus providing a temporal archive of student or product development. For example, one of my colleagues in a large (>200 students) microbiology lab course used KEEP Toolkit to document student learning during a semester-long research project. By requiring three snapshots she was able to provide a lot of structure via the template for the first snapshot, less structure for the second snapshot, and allow the students to decide how the third and final snapshot should be structured. In using this ramping-up of student input she not only helped students to learn the presentation expectations of the discipline of Microbiology she empowered them and provide a concrete mechanism by which she and they could see their own intellectual development. The gallery tool allows the instructor to assemble class works into a gallery that enables one to easily navigate and view student works from a given class as a single organizing snapshot.

Currently there are more than 500 students and faculty with UMD KEEP Toolkit accounts. On campus the KEEP Toolkit has been employed in both graduate and undergraduate courses, from introductory to upper and found uses ranging from a simple portfolio tool to a means of documenting student engagement and work in several of the College Park Scholars learning communities. The feedback on KEEP Toolkit from both faculty and students is positive and generally both groups find the tool fun, easy to use, and useful. If you are interested in exploring whether KEEP Toolkit might be a useful pedagogical tool for your class, contact CTE. Alternatively, watch for the call for applications for the 2008 CTE Summer Technology Institute, which CTE will host in late May. We will release the call for applicants later this semester.

University Teaching & Learning Program

Graduate students, boost your teaching, boost your CV – join the UTLP!

What is the UTLP? CTE’s University Teaching and Learning Program (UTLP) assists graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) in professionalizing as college teachers by encouraging you to self-reflectively practise and document your teaching in writing.

You complete the program with a notation on your transcript and a teaching philosophy and portfolio in hand. Institutions of higher education nowadays require teaching portfolios and philosophies from applicants for academic jobs.

Please visit http://www.cte.umd.edu/UTLP for further information on UTLP and electronic application forms.
Spring Teaching and Learning Series

How would you rate this course?
Creating, Adapting, and Implementing Course Evaluations

Tuesday, February 5
12:00 - 1:30 PM
Maryland Room
Marie Mount Hall

Campus wide student course evaluations are one mechanism for feedback on teaching and learning in your courses. They provide a useful and meaningful opportunity to gather student feedback on your course. This CTE workshop will focus on what can be learned from the campus’s online course evaluations, and we will discuss ways the fall course evaluations might be used to improve future courses. We will also discuss additional strategies for collecting feedback during the semester and developing individual course evaluations to address specific course needs.

Civic Engagement and Leadership Opportunities in Undergraduate Courses

Thursday, February 28
12:00 - 1:30 PM
Maryland Room
Marie Mount Hall

Presenters:
Barb Jacoby, Senior Scholar, Stamp Student Union, and Chair, Coalition for Civic Engagement and Leadership
Linda Moghadam, Professor of Sociology

Join us for a presentation of resources for teaching civic engagement at Maryland, produced by Professor of Sociology Linda Moghadam and available via the CCEL website, terpimpact.umd.edu. The guide, constructed from a broad survey of campus faculty, includes a comprehensive catalog of opportunities for teaching civic engagement, extant programs, and pedagogical guidance. We will also survey the recent experiences of ENGL 101, which currently includes civic engagement curricula in every section.

Teaching and Learning in Second Life

Wednesday, March 12
12:00 - 1:30 PM
Maryland Room
Marie Mount Hall

Presenters:
Don Heider, Associate Dean, Philip Merrill College of Journalism
Kari Kraus, Department of English and College of Information Studies
Yuanyuan Li, CTE staff

Second Life (SL), is a multi-user virtual environment platform that is emerging as a new educational landscape in which users create personae and operate in a virtual world. It has become part of higher education and higher education a part of SL. This workshop will look at the ways two faculty members have made Second Life part of their teaching. A general discussion of SL as an emerging educational platform will follow, including pedagogical implications, and challenges of using this innovation for e-learning.
The Faculty Teaching Consultation Division is designed to help provide support for campus instructors who would like to improve their teaching. Teachers work one-on-one with a Faculty Teaching Consultant, based on their own goals. The requesting teacher determines the issues to be explored, and the consultant provides an outside perspective, peer support for a plan of action, and suggestions for additional resources.

Consultations can address any number of areas, including, among other issues, assessment, active learning, collaborative learning, lecturing, instructional technology, syllabus construction, rubrics for grading, and scholarship in teaching and learning.

Any faculty member who teaches for the University of Maryland at College Park can request a teaching consultation, and they are completely confidential. For more information, contact the Center for Teaching Excellence at 301-405-9356 or via email at cte@umd.edu.

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**Mock Teaching:**
**Pedagogical Feedback for Graduate Teaching Assistants**

**Tuesday, March 25**
**4:00 - 7:00 PM**
**Maryland Room**
**Marie Mount Hall**

Increasingly, universities are requiring job candidates to demonstrate their teaching as part of the interview process. CTE is excited to offer a three-hour session during which a limited number of graduate teaching assistants will be provided the opportunity to demonstrate their teaching for peers, CTE staff, and faculty. To help TAs improve their teaching and be able to demonstrate enhanced teaching effectiveness during the academic job search, each TA participant will be provided with feedback on his or her mock teaching performance. Look for further details and an RSVP form soon.

**Distinguished Guest Presentation:**
**James Zull, Case Western Reserve University**

Zull is author of *The Art of Changing the Brain: Enriching the Practice of Teaching by Exploring the Biology of Learning*, and Professor of Biology and Director of the University Center for Innovation in Teaching and Education, at Case Western Reserve University.

**Wednesday, April 2**
**12:00 - 1:30 PM**
**Maryland Room**
**Marie Mount Hall**

From *The Art of Changing the Brain*: “Neuroscience tells us that the products of the mind—thought, emotions, artistic creation—are the result of the interactions of the biological brain with our senses and the physical world: in short, that thinking and learning are the products of a biological process. This realization, that learning actually alters the brain by changing the number and strength of synapses, offers a powerful foundation for rethinking teaching practice and one’s philosophy of teaching. James Zull invites teachers in higher education or any other setting to accompany him in his exploration of what scientists can tell us about the brain and to discover how this knowledge can influence the practice of teaching. He describes the brain in clear non-technical language and an engaging conversational tone, highlighting its functions and parts and how they interact, and always relating them to the real world of the classroom and his own evolution as a teacher.”

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**WORK WITH A CTE FACULTY TEACHING CONSULTANT**

The Faculty Teaching Consultation Division is designed to help provide support for campus instructors who would like to improve their teaching. Teachers work one-on-one with a Faculty Teaching Consultant, based on their own goals. The requesting teacher determines the issues to be explored, and the consultant provides an outside perspective, peer support for a plan of action, and suggestions for additional resources.
“Facebook...” continued from page 1

TLN: You created a “student group” on Facebook for your LBSC 690 class last semester. Can you describe how you and your students incorporated Facebook into the course as an additional tool for teaching and learning? Why did you decide to use Facebook (any specific learning outcomes)?

JG: I’ve used Facebook in all of my classes for the past couple years. It has a few benefits. On a most basic level, it lets people in the class (including me) learn who everyone else is. We can go through a whole term recognizing someone but not knowing their name. Facebook lets you figure that out. This semester I have 36 [students] and seeing their profiles helps me match faces to names.

Communication on social networks is also less intrusive than emails. Facebook provides discussion boards and ways for students to contact one another in a very informal way. In a sense, it extends the casual environment of the classroom online so students can talk and organize. It also helps students find one another. If they have a conversation after class, they can communicate on Facebook without knowing the other person’s email address (or even their name). Students frequently use this to send messages to one another. For example, I have a group project every semester. Students use Facebook to find partners for the project, to ask other students to join groups, and as a way for contacting other class members whose email addresses they may not have. I create a Facebook group for my courses, and some students also use the message board features of Facebook for a less-formal-than-Blackboard way of doing discussion. Students generally dislike Blackboard because it’s hard to use. The interface to Facebook is nicer, so the discussion boards there often replace the ones available on Blackboard.

TLN: How did your students react to using Facebook for academic purposes? Did they all have existing accounts? Were any students reluctant to open their profiles to a faculty member by joining the group?

JG: Basically all undergraduates have Facebook profiles and have no problem sharing. Most of their profiles are open anyway. Some of my masters students did not have accounts, but they had no complaints about creating them. Generally, social networking is so much a part of students’ lives that they don’t have a reaction to using it for class.

TLN: Many educators are now trying to reach students in ways that are relevant to their own lives, and often that involves using the technologies the students are already invested in – be it through Podcasts, Blogs, or social networking sites. In what ways have you found Facebook to be a useful pedagogical tool, and how might it offer advantages over official University course tools such as ELMS?

JG: Facebook is not designed for managing a course. I would probably not use it to post class materials or manage things. I also do not use it for official communications with my class because it is a personal, information environment. I see the benefit of Facebook as being a very informal medium for facilitating communication and community among students. ELMS or other official course tools are intended to be formal and official. Facebook is not, and I think it provides an important extension of the classroom environment that is beyond the scope of what course tools can do.

On a broader point, I think technology is really secondary to teaching. Presenting material clearly, working to make sure students understand core points, reacting to them in class, and being available for discussion makes a class successful. If you can’t do that in person, using blogs or podcasts will not help in the slightest. I think these tools should be used only to add on to a course, not to replace the traditional way things are done.

“Facebook...” continued on page 12
Subscribe to Teaching & Learning News ~ http://www.cte.umd.edu/TLNMailingList/

For more than fifteen years TLN has included articles, notes, and schedules to keep the campus informed about new technologies, available grants, fellowship notices, workshops and roundtables, distinguished lectures, assessment, learning outcomes, classroom management strategies, consultation programs, new conferences, established programs, award winners, grant recipients, University policies on teaching, and other valuable information for faculty and graduate teaching assistants. Most important, it always suggests ways to enhance teaching for better learning. Subscribing to the TLN listserv list takes about twenty seconds and means that you will receive approximately five emails a year, notifying you that a new issue of the only regular campus-wide publication on teaching and learning has arrived.

Upcoming Grant Opportunities for Teaching & Learning

Lilly-East Conference Grants for Graduate Students

Due February 29

The Lilly Conferences combine interactive workshop sessions, discussions, and feature presentations, with opportunities for informal discussion about excellence in college and university teaching and learning. They bring together faculty and graduate students from across disciplines and types of academic institutions. CTE staff, along with University of Maryland faculty and graduate teaching assistants, have attended this conference for a number of years. It is an outstanding opportunity to meet others from the Mid-Atlantic interested in the scholarship of teaching and learning and to discuss effective strategies for undergraduate education. The 2008 Lilly East Conference is scheduled for Wednesday, April 16 through Friday, April 18, 2008 and will be hosted at the University of Delaware.

CTE, with support from the Dean for Undergraduate Studies, awards twenty-five CTE Lilly-East Graduate Student Conference Grants that will cover the costs of attending the conference. Priority for these grants will be given to students who have submitted a conference abstract and/or participate in one of CTE’s graduate student programs or in departmental initiatives in teaching and learning. To apply for a Lilly-East Conference Grant, click here (deadline February 15, 2008). For further information on CTE’s Lilly-East Conference Grants, contact the Graduate Coordinator at x 4-1283.

Call for 2008-2009 Instructional Improvement Grant Proposals

Due March 3

The Office of Undergraduate Studies and the Center for Teaching Excellence are pleased to sponsor the Improvement of Instruction Grants (IIG) program for the 2008-2009 academic year. This program supports instructional changes that improve undergraduate teaching and learning. Individual faculty members, as well as departmental or interdisciplinary clusters, are invited to apply.

Each year we define a limited number of areas that are a priority for funding.

2008-2009 Priority Areas:

Enhancing Intellectual Challenge & Depth
Peer Teaching
Enhancing Transfer Student Success
Civic Engagement and Service-Learning
Teaching with Technology
Other

Details for each category, an explanation of the proposal process, abstracts of previous grants, and other information can be found at: http://www.cte.umd.edu/iig/
TLN: Did you encounter any difficulties or challenges in using Facebook with a class? For example inappropriate messages from students or being witness to problematic profile content?

JG: I have actually never heard any comments from students about Facebook. They just use it.

Is there such a thing as problematic profile content? Students post all kinds of crazy pictures of themselves doing inappropriate things. I do take time in class at some point to tell them that posting photos of themselves drunk and half naked is a bad thing for their careers, but frankly, what they post on their Facebook profile is nobody’s business but their own. I use it specifically because it is not a university system, and the students have a right to put anything they want in their profiles. It is not at all my place (nor the place of any faculty member) to tell a student that their profile content is inappropriate. It is far beyond our right to tell students what they should be doing in their real social lives, and it is equally inappropriate for us to be telling them what to do in their online social lives. Facebook is designed for posting pictures and socializing, not for classes. If we use it for classes, we need to realize our intentions are secondary. If faculty want professional profiles for their students, they shouldn’t use an entertainment-oriented social network like Facebook for their class.

TLN: Will you use Facebook in future classes?

JG: Of course.

TLN: What advice or caveats would you offer teachers or administrators who are beginning to interact with students in virtual environments?

First, anyone considering using Facebook or a virtual environment in their class should use it themselves, actively, for several months before the class starts. It is important to be familiar with all the issues, features, and possibilities of the tool you are using. You also should be sensitive to the learning curve and privacy concerns of students. For example, I would never use Second Life for students, because it requires them to learn a lot of new things that have nothing to do with the course material. Facebook, on the other hand, allows them to put in just their name and nothing else, hide their personal information, and work in a very familiar online environment. Finally, teachers should keep in mind that they are borrowing technology from Facebook or another virtual environment. It is not designed around them, and their interests are secondary to the primary purpose of the site. It should be used for the features it brings by default and not forced to support other needs of the class. That’s what course management software is for.
Participants who taught large lecture classes experimented with technologies to facilitate a more intimate atmosphere in these classes and monitor students’ progress over the semester. Professor Sheri Parks of the American Studies Department used KEEP Toolkit as a simple digital portfolio program to create a more coherent class identity by dividing her students into small groups and having them complete end-of-semester e-portfolio projects. In her entry-level Japanese class, Professor Lindsay Yotsukura offered students the option of completing a digital portfolio that presented their individual development as Japanese learners over the semester.

Other projects developed by CTE’s Summer Institute participants included using student classroom response devices (clickers) as a classroom assessment tool. Professor Marvin Scott of Kinesiology used clickers as part of his in-class exam reviews. Other faculty were interested in transitioning from an older didactic technology to a new one, a goal that Professor Jason Kuo of Art History and Archaeology accomplished by shifting from using traditional 35 mm slides to digital images in his Asian art survey class.

Announcements of the application for the 2008 Summer Technology Institute (May 27 – 29, 2008) will be released later this semester; watch the CTE web site for information.

If you have questions or want more information regarding the 2007 or 2008 institutes, please email David Eubanks, Assistant Director, at eubanks@umd.edu.

Online Teaching Resource Packets

CTE has made available a valuable teaching resource for the campus community. Visit http://cte.umd.edu/PODresources.htm to review a number of brief essays published by the POD (Professional and Organizational Development) Network.

These POD packets address current, relevant topics in higher education teaching and learning. Each is composed of past “Essays on Teaching Excellence,” a POD Network publication series.

Written by expert scholar-practitioners, these thoughtful and succinct essays can be used as readings for faculty development workshops, seminars, individual consultations, and classes on college teaching.

EXAMPLES OF AVAILABLE PACKETS:

- The Learning Process
- Change, Renewal, and the Professoriate
- Technology and Related Issues
- Improvement of Teaching and Assessment
- Alternatives to Traditional Teaching Methods and Learning Strategies
- The Student/Teacher Relationship
- Defining and Characterizing Teaching
- Motivating Students
- Cooperative/Collaborative Learning
- Small Groups
- Critical Thinking
- Diversity Issues
- Grading, Testing and Assessment
- Introductory Courses/General Education
National Teach-In: Focus the Nation

On January 31, University of Maryland participated in the national teach-in Focus the Nation. Millions took part in various symposia at different campuses and school across the US, focusing discussion upon climate change and global warming solutions.

Here at College Park, the educational initiative was led by the office of Undergraduate Studies, and culminated in a daylong series of panel discussions, a green fair, and a “Green Stage” of artists and performers, engaging in environmental issues. Professors, community activists, performance poets, university administrators, environmental agency representatives, and many more, including, of course, numerous students participated in the conversations and activities occurring on campus throughout the day. Author of this year’s First Year Book, and founder and director of the Chesapeake Climate Action Network, Mike Tidwell, was among the impressing array of key note speakers.

For more information about Focus the Nation, visit: www.focusthenation.umd.edu or www.focusthenation.org.

“More than just that one day, Focus the Nation: Global Warming Solutions for America, is an unprecedented educational initiative, involving over a thousand colleges, universities, high schools, middle schools, faith groups, civic organizations and businesses. Focus the Nation is a catalyzing force helping shift the national conversation about global warming towards a determination to face this civilizational challenge.” www.focusthenation.org

Faculty Handbook of Policies & Resources

- Can I reschedule a final exam?
- What are the University’s guidelines for attendance policies?
- In what cases I am required to submit early warning grades?
- What must be included in my course syllabi?
- Do I need approval to sell my own textbook to students taking my course?

This guide offers a brief introduction to the University’s policies, procedures, and resources related to teaching, advising and mentoring. It is available at the following address:

http://www.faculty.umd.edu/teach/InstructionalGuide.htm
Upcoming Conferences and Institutes

Innovations in Teaching & Learning Conference

Proposals Due: February 11
Conference Date: April 4

Jointly sponsored by the Office of Information Technology and the Center for Teaching Excellence

Learning at the University of Maryland takes place in many locations and within the context of a variety of forums. Instructors are challenged on a daily basis to find innovative ways of enhancing student learning experiences. In traditional classrooms, distance, collaborative or independent learning environments, students and faculty explore a variety of techniques and tools meant to improve the overall academic experience. The Innovations in Teaching and Learning (ITL) Conference has evolved to showcase and celebrate the creativity and dedication of University instructors who have demonstrated excellence in their teaching endeavors.

MidAtlantic Clickers Conference

Hold this date: April 3

The Center for Teaching Excellence, OIT and TurningTechnologies will host a one-day TurningPoint User Conference on innovations and uses of student classroom response devices (clickers). Watch the CTE website for information on registration and the call for proposals.

Call for 2nd Summer Institute for Teaching with New(er) Technology

May 27-29

CTE announces our second pilot Summer Institute, a three-day retreat for faculty interested in developing effective uses of instructional technologies in their fall 2008 courses. CTE staff, faculty peers from across campus, and OIT staff will guide participants as they determine ways to adopt new tools for learning goals.

Applicants will propose a preliminary implementation plan for one instructional technology, conveying the pedagogical value of this strategy.

Participants will receive a stipend.

During the 2008 academic year, participants will meet to review the effectiveness of their new technology and will share their findings with the campus and with scholars of teaching and learning.

Keep posted for our call for proposals.

The Honor Pledge

The Student Honor Council encourages instructors to include the following information in course syllabi:

“The University of Maryland, College Park has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit http://www.shc.umd.edu.”

To further exhibit your commitment to academic integrity, remember to sign the Honor Pledge on all examinations and assignments:

“I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination (assignment).”
Suicide Awareness Health Education and Training Program

The Suicide Awareness Health Education and Training (S.A.H.E.T) Program is designed to inform and educate the campus community about depression and to prevent suicide. Its goal is to help faculty, staff, and teaching assistants understand how to help students who may be suffering; how to recognize signs of depression and suicidal inclinations, what to say to a student who may be depressed and/or suicidal, and identify resources. The presentation includes a video and a discussion facilitated by a mental health professional. Presentations are typically 1 hour and can be scheduled by contacting Carrie Martin at 301-314-8112 or cmartin@health.umd.edu.

International Coffee Hour

Wednesday, February 13
3:00 - 4:00 PM
Ground Floor Lounge
Dorchester Hall

On February 13 CTE will be sponsoring an International Coffee Hour at IES. Enjoy free snacks and coffee while socializing with American and International students, staff and community members. Coffee hour will be held in the ground floor lounge of Dorchester Hall.

The Living Document: A Teaching and Learning Wiki

The CTE-Lilly Fellow Wiki was created by the 2005-07 cohort as a forum for the exchange and accumulation of teaching and learning knowledge. You are invited to add to this document by editing pages or creating new ones on any topics related to teaching and learning. To log-in use your UMD Directory ID and password. Visit: http://www.otal.umd.edu/wiki/cte.

To learn more about the Lilly Fellows’ wiki project see the article in the September-October 2007 edition of Teaching and Learning News.

Share Your Teaching and Learning News!

CTE welcomes your contributions to Teaching and Learning News. Submit an article, or send your news to cte@umd.edu.