



Centre for
Learning and Teaching

focus

on university teaching and learning

Image by Oliver Braubach (used with permission)



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From the Director

Building on the buzz surrounding the Dalhousie Conference on University Teaching and Learning last April, this issue of Focus brings the ideas from an outstanding conference keynote to our larger community and adds new ideas from Dalhousie colleagues about integrating diverse technologies to help students achieve success in their learning.



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**DALHOUSIE
UNIVERSITY**
Inspiring Minds

How Online Technologies Have Nurtured a Connectivist Learning Space for First-Year Students and Their Teachers



*Sophie Karanicolas and
Catherine Snelling,
Oral Health, University
Of Adelaide, Australia*

We teach in the Bachelor of Oral Health (BOH) 3-year undergraduate program offered by the School of Dentistry, at the University of Adelaide, Australia. Since its inception in 2002, around 30-35 students have enrolled in first year with a significant number of mature age students in each cohort. Our students come from a diverse range of life and work experiences. Many of them come from non-biological educational backgrounds and have varying confidence levels in the use of social and e-learning technologies. Common to all students starting university, our BOH students encounter a number of assimilation issues as they begin the transition to post-secondary education. The BOH program is primarily delivered in the traditional

health science framework of long student contact hours, teacher-driven learning experiences, extensive face-to-face group work and ‘hands on’ clinical practice. However, the most significant learning challenges that our first year students appear to encounter (based on both formal and anecdotal feedback) are in the Human Biology course, and these issues are understandably compounded for those students with no biological background. The subject matter is content-rich and highly specific in nature, and incorporates new and complex terminology and concepts that require clinical application.

As teachers in the Human Biology course, we recognized that there was a significant need to implement major changes in the way the learning material was both designed and delivered. Initially we developed our own social network of educators to build on our individual strengths and explored new delivery modes that would enhance student-teacher connectivity, as well as alleviating long hours of ‘on campus’ learning for our first year undergraduates. *(continued on page 2) >*

(continued from page 1) > We soon recognized ourselves as ‘digital immigrants’ in this ever-evolving area of education, and subsequently enrolled in a postgraduate course in online learning conducted by the University of Adelaide’s Centre for Learning and Professional Development (CLPD). This was one of the best decisions we have made in our professional lives, and gave us the skills and confidence to explore ways to design and deliver effective online learning opportunities. Initially our aim was to simply offer our students greater flexibility and choice in how and where they wished to undertake their learning in human biology, but more importantly (and somewhat unexpectedly), we began to see that we could use these social learning tools to enable students to form networks with their peers and teachers alike.

These networks developed in an evolving ‘connectivist’ environment that is especially important in the first year experience of higher education. The importance of forming these social learning networks reinforced the “...amplification of learning, knowledge and understanding through the extension of a personal network” (Siemens, 2005). These networks develop the students’ ownership of their own learning as a collective entity, generating a common sense of purpose, vision, and shared values.

The main online social learning tools that we have used to date include blogs, interactive on-line learning modules (IOLMs), podcasts we refer to as “Quickbytes”, and wikis. We have always set out to select the ‘right tool for the job’ as probably the most critical step – as it has to be a good fit.

We use our blogs to foster our first year students’ on-line communication skills (and confidence for the less inclined) and as a social and study support system as they settle into university life. Here is a link to one of our blogs: <http://bohoney08.blogspot.com>

The IOLMs were primarily developed to help students become familiar and confident with key concepts in human biology. They are able to access

the enhanced and narrated PowerPoint presentations up to a week ahead of the face-to-face lecture. The novice ‘biologists’ have an opportunity to listen, watch and ultimately learn new terms, concepts and applications of topics that are entirely new to them – and they can replay the module as often as they like. Here’s a link to our IOLM on Embryology, a perennial challenge to our students: <http://ajax.acue.adelaide.edu.au/~allan/embrology/player.html> In addition to this approach to learning, the learning quiz checkpoints embedded at intervals in each IOLM are linked to our learning management system. We can access the results and provide our students with group feedback. This approach also enables us to focus on any poorly understood areas in class time, making this a more valuable use of on campus time.

We use our blogs to foster our first year students’ on-line communication skills (and confidence for the less inclined) and as a social and study support system as they settle into university life.

After producing a number of IOLMs we recognised a need for short on-line learning opportunities, which we have termed “Quickbytes”. As the name suggests these on-line learning tools are around 5 minutes in duration and serve to re-emphasize and reinforce key underpinning concepts in a succinct and focussed way. This Quickbyte is one we use in the oral histology topic in human biology: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y1AUSVWq2h0>

Our wiki-based student research project is probably where a lot of the skills and confidence levels that have been developed by our students (and ourselves) come together. Students work in groups to research and discover how broad areas of general health impact on oral health, and use the wikis as an on-line repository as well as a vibrant and often transformative platform where exploration and discovery can occur. Each group is e-facilitated by one of the teaching team, and regular contact is made using the wiki discussion tab. Consequently, the perennial group work problem of inequitable contribution is transparently dealt with by the wiki’s history tab, as it highlights each member’s input.

As for us the educators, our team approach was not a forced partnership, or a ‘contrived collegiality’ (Hargreaves, 1995), instead it naturally formed from a shared teaching philosophy that placed the students at the core of all learning activities. From our experiences it seems that connected learners

need connected teachers, as Shindler (2004, p. 274) reinforces by saying "...good teaching has always needed to be collaborative, and collegiality continues to be a defining characteristic of highly effective schools." The support we continue to receive from the CLPD's Online Education Centre has been invaluable and through their showcasing of social learning tools, we have been able to create and nurture a connectivist learning space.

Finding a group of like-minded colleagues across disciplines and schools, and consequently forming a research group has enabled us to share e-learning experiences in a collaborative peer review process that encourages reflection and ongoing development of our initiatives.

The value of ongoing evaluation and student feedback on the effectiveness of our on-line learning tools is never underestimated, and we see this initiative as one which will continue to evolve and enhance the learning experiences of our students, our colleagues, and ourselves as educators.

If you would like to contact Sophie or Cathy with questions or comments, please email them at: sophie.karanicolas@adelaide.edu.au or Catherine.snelling@adelaide.edu.au

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Forum on Student Engagement

What's happening in Student Engagement at Dalhousie?

Date: January 26th, 2012

Location: Great Hall, University Club

An opportunity for Faculty, Instructors, and Teaching Assistants to gather together to share ideas about student engagement activities across disciplines.

For more information, please contact Deborah Kiceniuk, PhD, Associate Director, Centre for Learning and Teaching: 494-3808 or at deborah.kiceniuk@dal.ca



Exploring the Use of Facebook in Education: Promising, Yet More Work is Needed



*Anwar Alhenshiri,
Computer Science*

Social networks are being used by a wide range of demographics. Youth in particular are obsessed with using Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace. An estimate of above 90% of undergraduate university students (aged 18-23) use Facebook on a daily basis. The popularity of Facebook—the most visited social network

website—makes it interesting to explore its usefulness not only for socializing in terms of sharing sorority events and keeping in touch with friends, but also for other more profitable purposes such as education.

Research has shown that students—through Facebook connections—share several aspects of knowledge by getting questions answered, receiving advice (similar to web forums), and coordinating on certain tasks that involve more than one person. Future research on the benefits of Facebook in particular and Social Networking Sites (SNSs) in general with regard to education will involve exploring several directions in which the social aspect of human life can be exploited to help us accomplish several learning and teaching goals. In other words, the rapid burst in Web genres and the increasing use of Web 2.0 has a promising future in the learning and teaching process.

This article reports the results of using Facebook as a tool in teaching an information retrieval computer science course to Dalhousie undergraduate and graduate students. The course was intended to teach students concepts related to language modeling, text analysis, classification of documents for retrieval, and several aspects related to Web search and search interface design. The class had 21 students (9 undergraduates and 12 graduates) and it was offered in the summer term of 2011. The Facebook page for the course was created on May 2nd, 2011. Of the 21 students, 19 students joined the page immediately while the remaining two students never did. The main goal of this article is to show the possible benefits and highlight some related difficulties of using Facebook in improving some aspects of teaching and learning. The data summarized here were derived from the actual activities on the Facebook page (Figure 1) and

also from an online questionnaire students were asked to answer after the end of the course.

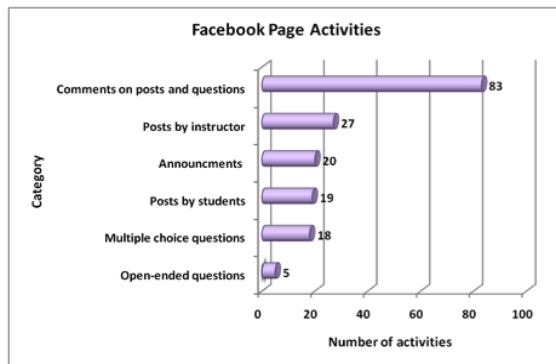


Figure 1

The idea was to create an environment in which students could review course material by encouraging them to answer questions posted on the page. The goal was also for them see each other's answers and think about the material in creative ways. This was done by asking students to read the text book chapters and post their questions on the page. They were also encouraged to answer each other's questions. The issue of sharing understanding of the material was further emphasized when the questions were discussed during each class that followed posting questions. The intent of posting reading material was also to enable students to see the comments they provide to each other as a form of feedback after reading the material. To further understand how Facebook encouraged students to comment and answer the questions posted on the page, Figure 2 shows the student answering activities. Note that open-ended questions (5 questions out of 23) had the least number of responses (3.6 responses) and are not included in the chart in Figure 2 because of their insignificance.

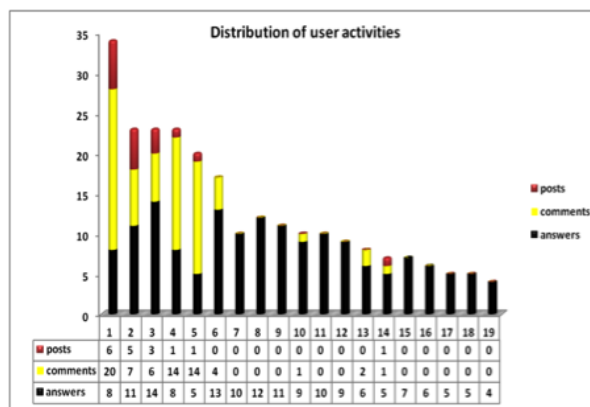


Figure 2

From the data derived in the study, the students tended to focus more on answering questions related to the class material than on commenting on informational posts. According to the ANOVA statistical test, the difference between the comments provided by students to informational posts and the answers provided for questions was significant ($F=9.2, p<0.004$). This finding shows that students were more concerned with the old-fashioned questions than the social aspect of sharing knowledge through providing feedback on informational posts. It is worth noting that there was no significant difference between graduate and undergraduate students with regard to all kinds of activities on the page (ANOVA, $F=0.04, p<0.95$).

To further understand the user behaviour on the page, a survey was created and 17 of the 19 students who joined the Facebook page responded to the survey. Of those, 94.1% indicated that they use Facebook on a daily basis. When asked for what purposes they use Facebook, students provided answers that are shown in Figure 3. They indicated that—mostly—they have been using Facebook for socializing activities and for discussions with friends. Of the sample in the study, very few students indicated that they use Facebook for knowledge acquisition or question answering. With regard to following the course's Facebook page, students stated that they followed the page because of the helpfulness perceived in the instructor's posts, announcements, and questions. In addition, posts and comments by students achieved a reasonable number of responses (Figure 4).

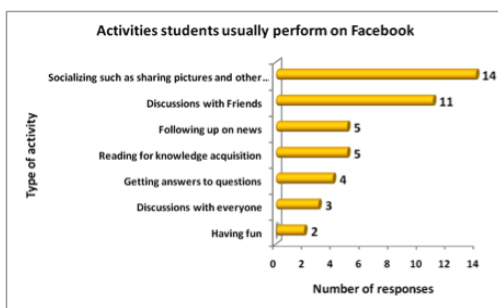


Figure 3

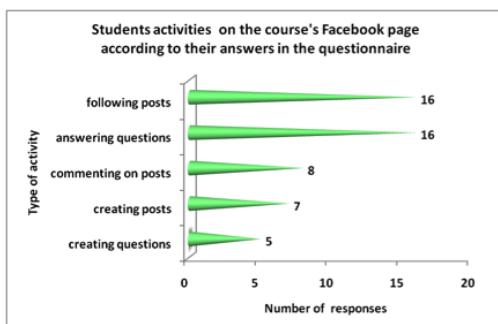


Figure 4

As shown in Figure 4, students seemed to have followed posts, and answered questions more often than they created posts and questions. This is also demonstrated in the actual page-derived data depicted in Figure 2. The results indicate that even though the instructor encouraged students in many ways (e.g., by explicitly asking them to post questions about chapters of the text book they read or articles they review as out-of-class exercises) to share their knowledge and ask questions, they remained attached to the idea of following the instructor's posts and answering his questions. On average, students had 13 activities on the page during the first eight weeks of the course (ranging 4-34 activities). The results indicate that the Facebook idea motivated the participation of some students more than others.

To summarize, although students use Facebook on a daily basis (sometimes even in the classroom when the instructor is speaking), they tend not to do so when asked to monitor a specific page to improve their knowledge acquisition in a course. Students in this course are still far more interested in social aspects of Facebook such as sharing photos and following events than they are concerned with knowledge acquisition on Facebook. If we assume that there should be a feature of Facebook (or any other SNS) particularly designed for educational purposes to encourage students to discuss class exercises, questions, and the like, we may lose the social aspect of Facebook that—in essence—seems to create interest in Facebook activities; i.e., it is a tradeoff between entertaining and educating. Using the social network Facebook as an educational tool requires modifying its purposes of socializing, keeping connected with friends and family, and entertaining. Therefore, it becomes as interesting as any other online teaching tool that degrades its social power with respect to group communications.

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How to Excel in Engineering Economics



Dr. Ronald Pelot

Industrial Engineering



Navin Chari

Industrial Engineering

The Engineering Economics course IENG2005 at Dalhousie University is mandatory for all Engineering students, and can be taken at any point between the second and fourth years of enrolment. As the composition of students is quite varied in terms of engineering discipline, age, and work term experience, we aim to tailor the course to accommodate these differences. Performing cost analysis using spreadsheets is an important aspect of the course, but the incoming students' facility with Excel ranges from nil to very good. Over the years the computer tutorials had to be geared to the lowest common denominator, and proceeded at a snail's pace. This is counterproductive, as it is not only boring for the more advanced students, but it precludes us from achieving a moderate level of expertise by the end of classes.

We conducted a focus group two years ago with graduates of this course to explore options for revamping the material. With the Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board planning to change their assessment procedure in 2014 to become outcomes-based, this was a good opportunity to revise the objectives, and amend the course content and delivery accordingly. Aside from noting the disparity in Excel skills, the focus group students also suggested more challenging, realistic, problems to work on, and described some difficulty in translating "word problems" into corresponding mathematical representations.

One key mechanism for addressing these deficiencies was to create a series of interactive online tutorials. We created four spreadsheet tutorials based on numerical problem descriptions (Using Basic Excel Knowledge to Build an Income Statement; Solving a Cash Flow Series Problem Using Excel; Creating a Loan and Data Table; and Bonds and Conditional Functions), and two problem-solving tutorials (Coffee Shop Profitability; and Understanding Sunk Costs). These exercises allow the student to learn spreadsheet functions, starting with the most basic and progressing to the more advanced

tools needed in the course. At the same time, the tutorials use material being taught concurrently in the class, thus allowing additional practice other than the homework assignments. Some of the more challenging Excel functions were also presented during the in-class tutorials to complement the online learning. Since the tutorials are self-paced and can be repeated at will, benefits of the online tutorials included accommodating several learning styles, diverse Excel capabilities, and English interpretation difficulties. Furthermore, we ensured uniformity across the online course materials by creating standardized PowerPoint slides for the foundation, as well as embedding videos, providing a jpeg image of what the final spreadsheet from each exercise should look like, and linking with a glossary of Excel and Engineering Economics terms.

To bolster the course outcomes, we also decided to further blend the instructional and experiential learning by creating case studies and in-class assignment/tests in order to reinforce course outcomes and other goals. These include enhancing the comprehension of written material; performing and applying some external data searches; enhancing analysis and problem solving; and obliging students to make a leap from basic course concepts to more difficult applied concepts. The online tutorials are important stepping stones in allowing the students to tackle these more complex spreadsheet-based case analyses.

One complication was to devise a case study for a class of 165 students that would allow for some flexibility in problem formulation and solutions across 35 groups, while ensuring a modicum of consistency for fairness and ease of marking. Therefore, the case studies were carefully designed by providing all groups with the same scenario describing the problem context and some limitations, while allowing some latitude on assumptions such as expense patterns, expected inflation rates, etc. Thus the form and difficulty of each group's solution were comparable, but the exact answers differed. The benefits of the case study are that it parallels and expands on the current curriculum; is broken-down into multiple submissions over the tenure of the course; requires the use of the Excel functions that the students are learning in class and through the online tutorials; and requires students to plan for gathering information, perform research, and work in groups.

After the course was completed, we conducted an online survey using *Opinio*. We assessed: which online tutorials the students completed (Table 1); which was the most/least useful (Figures 1 and 2); which helped in the understanding of Engineering Economics concepts (Table 2); and which helped in the completion of assignments and case studies (Table 2).

Table 1: Online Tutorial Completion

	Percentage Completed
T1: Basic Excel Techniques	77%
T2: Cash Flow Series	73%
T3: Creating a Loan Table	69%
T4: Bonds & Conditional Functions	55%
Coffee Shop Profitability	3%
Understanding Sunk Costs	7%

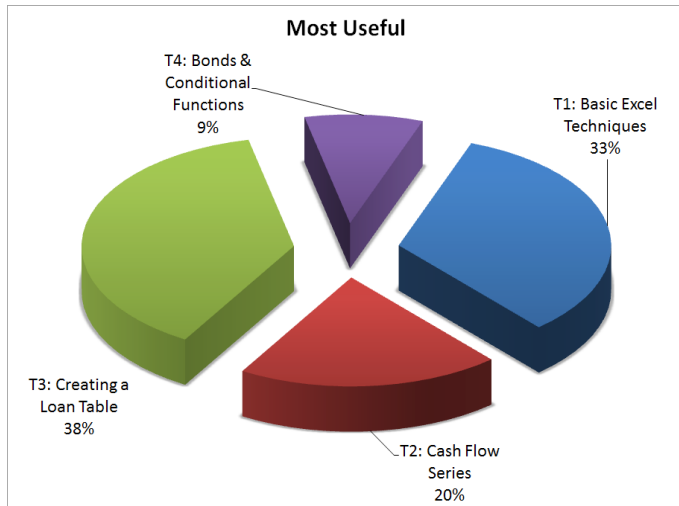


Figure 1: Most Useful Tutorial

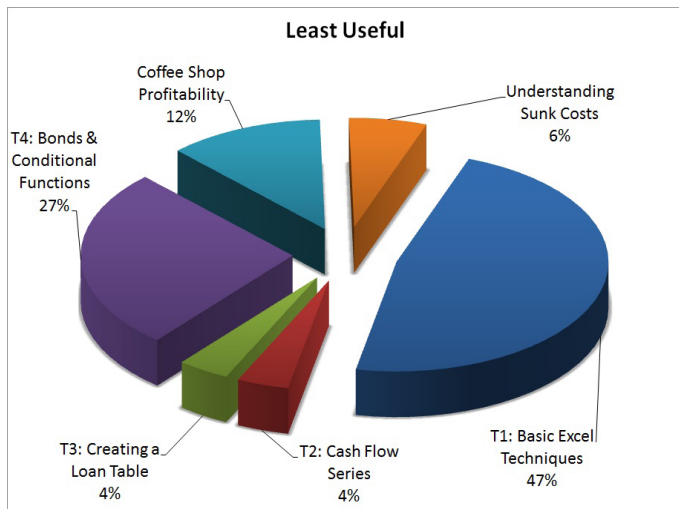


Figure 2: Least Useful Tutorial

The most interesting detail gleaned from Figures 1 and 2 is that the first tutorial was the most useful for a third of the class, and also the least useful to half the class, thus reinforcing our prior belief that some students need to learn all the introductory Excel features, while others skimmed through it as it was superfluous to their prior learning. In contrast, Tutorial 3 was found to be the most useful to the greatest number of students, while few found it to be relatively useless. The two problem-solving tutorials were only prepared later in the course, so most students did not take advantage of them. Table 2 shows that all the online spreadsheet tutorials help in many respects, although the introductory one, T1, had less value added overall.

Table 2: Value of Online Tutorials

	T1	T2	T3	T4
Helped Understand Concepts	70%	96%	91%	84%
Confidence in Using Excel	94%	98%	98%	81%
Helped With Assignments	64%	82%	87%	81%
Helped With Case Studies	74%	86%	85%	76%

A sample of comments from the online survey includes the following:

“It used functions that I had never seen before, and I ended up having to use these functions several times throughout the course.”

“I feel more confident about Excel since taking this course and I have been able to apply [it] to my other classes.”

“The tutorial was clear [on] how to calculate a coupon value and various techniques to use on Excel not explained in class.”

In terms of an overall assessment of this pilot project, we have found that the students would like tutorials on more topics, particularly in the areas of income taxes and return-on-investment. For our second iteration of the course revision, we will also review the balance between self-study and instructor guidance for working through the tutorials, the amount of emphasis on the case study, group work versus individual assignments, and the proportion of theory versus practical content.

We would like to acknowledge Industrial Engineering students Megan Barteaux and Joseph Langer for their help in preparing these tutorials, as well as the Dean of Engineering for funding this course development activity.

Interactive, Interdisciplinary On-line Learning in Risk Management: Using Second Life for Transatlantic Education

Kevin Quigley (School of Public Administration, Dalhousie),

Howard Ramsay (University of Strathclyde Business School, UK), and

Emily Pond, Research Assistant and Project Coordinator, CIP Initiative, School of Public Administration

Social and organizational complexity generates an endless set of risks, but there are limited resources to manage them. There is rarely a single authority to make a binding risk management decision; instead the nature of the risk often requires collaboration, coordination and trade-offs between disparate and often competing stakeholders. The challenge is not merely a technical one. There are many social, legal, business and environmental issues that impede successful risk management. These challenges require imaginative solutions that take a broad approach to understanding and managing risk.

The Foundations of Risk is an online risk management course recently co-authored by Drs. John Quigley and Calvin Burns from the University of Strathclyde's Business School (UK), Education Technologist Howard Ramsay, also from Strathclyde, and Dr. Ron Pelot from Dalhousie's Department of Industrial Engineering and Dr. Kevin Quigley from Dalhousie University's School of Public Administration. The course is a 12-week, professionally-oriented course; it includes a strong theoretical foundation, practical case studies, video tutorials, and on-line discussion fora. The course is highly interactive and is taught using risk management tools and techniques from statistics, psychology, sociology and anthropology, respectively.

This year we received a contribution from the Canada School of Public Service's Innovative Public Management Research Fund to offer this course to public servants in Ottawa. In addition to our regular on-line material, for this pilot, three tutorials were included that occurred in the virtual reality platform Second Life. The course was also offered in two sections – one in French and one in English.

The Second Life Component

Second Life - www.secondlife.com - is an online "virtual world" where users are represented in a 3D environment on their computer screen and are able to move their avatars around and interact with others using textual or voice communication. In Second Life

users are represented by avatars which can be made to look similar to their real life appearance. These basic accounts are adequate for most engagement although paid-for accounts allow much greater avatar customization and ownership of virtual land on which buildings can be placed.

A company or institution that uses Second Life will generally rent an area (in effect, server space) and will then have complete control over whose avatar can enter that area and what they can do. The rented area can then be customized with classrooms, lecture halls, meeting rooms or any other type of learning space. Avatars are able to move about the rooms, sit and otherwise engage with their environment and the other avatars.

Second Life has been found to give particular benefits in education especially where students are spread geographically and find it expensive or otherwise impractical to meet face-to-face. While face-to-face classrooms often look to on-line resources to supplement in-class learning, on-line classes are often searching for ways to create the connections that a face-to-face classroom provides. Compared with other on-line conferencing systems such as Skype or WebEx, Second Life can enable a more immediate social experience with greater engagement from a feeling of presence in this on-line world.

In other ways, Second Life is immature, however. Students sometimes comment on the lack of body language as avatars are limited in what aspects of physical self-expression they can use. Since control of avatars is through a keyboard and mouse, moving beyond the basic movement controls can be challenging for some users. Second Life is powerful networking software, which requires relatively complex connections to the Second Life servers and this can raise issues of firewalls and correct connectivity for some users who may attempt to access Second Life from government or commercial systems. Often participants find it simpler to connect

from their own home PC which has a simpler set-up and fewer firewall issues. More employer support is one possible solution to this problem. If, for instance, participants could work at home on the days in which Second Life sessions are run, it would probably help participation rates.

Second Life Results

We introduced the course and Second Life to students at a two-day, face-to-face workshop in Ottawa in January. The on-line part of the course started immediately thereafter. There were three sections to the course – rational approaches to risk, risk perception, and the role of institutions. Each section took approximately four weeks to complete. We ended each of the three sections with a Second Life session in Strathclyde’s Second Life lecture hall or seminar room. The first and second sessions were conducted in a conventional lecture hall format. After a brief introduction by the professors, pre-assigned groups each made presentations on a pre-assigned task or answered pre-assigned questions. For the third session, the avatars sat in circles and discussed pre-assigned questions. Each session lasted about one hour. There were anywhere from five to ten participants at each session.



We surveyed students at the end of the course and asked them if the Second Life Sessions enhanced their learning experience. In addition to rating their overall experience with the workshop, students were asked to assess their comfort level in each of the sections of the course, including Second Life. The results were largely positive. The first session (rational approaches) seemed to be less successful – students gave it 3 out of 4 – but this section generally was less popular than the other sections due to the quantitative

methods we used, which the students found more challenging. Moreover, it was the first session and it may be that it takes some time to become accustomed to the software. The second and third sessions scored 3.6 and 3.8 out of 4, respectively. (Ten students completed the survey.)

From the instructor’s standpoint there are also some challenges. Second Life does not really provide the same visual cues as a real life encounter. There can be silences, for instance, during which the instructor wonders whether or not people are silent because they are confused or because they understand and simply do not have any questions. We discovered that in the lecture format, it is better if the avatars stand up before they speak so it is clear who we should be listening to. Like any lecture, the instructors also have to come prepared; it is helpful to have a few slides and to pre-assign some questions so that there is some structure to the interaction. Finally, as with any adult education environment, the instructor also needs to give participants ample time to speak and engage with the others.

We feel we tested a number of things in this course that were new for many participants: interdisciplinary approaches to risk; new risk frameworks; Second Life; 12 week on-line learning; video lecturing; workshops; courses in both official languages; and transatlantic engagement. On balance we are satisfied that this was a very successful pilot and we look forward to offering the course again soon.

Goodbye, Aileen Patterson!



In July, after 5 years as the SRI Administrator for the Centre for Learning and Teaching, Aileen Patterson is now the Office Manager in the Biology Department here at Dalhousie. As well as being responsible for overseeing the administration and distribution of SRI forms and reports, and working as the CLT budget officer, many of you will have spoken with Aileen when making last-minute requests for SRI reports.

Aileen’s organization and efficiency, as well as her friendly and helpful disposition, will be much missed in the CLT Office. Everyone here wishes Aileen every success in her new position!

Hello, Dr. Fay Patel and Michelle Soucy!



CLT recently welcomed Dr. Fay Patel to Dalhousie University as the Associate Director (Curriculum Planning and Student Ratings of Instruction). She will hold individual and team consultations on the implementation of the new senate SRI policy during the 2011-2012 transition year (which will be paper-based) and looks forward to working with all stakeholders to ensure a smooth transition phase and to prepare for migration to an SRI electronic capture system in subsequent years. In addition, Fay will also consult on curriculum design and the effective integration of student feedback into curriculum redesign initiatives. Faculties and departments can contact Fay to facilitate discussions at faculty meetings and in custom workshops on the SRI policy implementation and

integrating it into curriculum design. Fay may be contacted at 494-1895 or at fay.patel@dal.ca.

Fay has over twenty-five years of experience in higher education in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the U.S.A. and South Africa. Her special areas of interest and research focus include the scholarship of teaching; curriculum design and student ratings of instruction; international development; intercultural communication; organizational culture and communication; the diffusion of innovations and information technologies and development; and ethical considerations in online research. Fay's current co-edited and co-authored book publications include *Intercultural Communication: Building global community*. Delhi, India: Sage Publications (2011) and *Working Women: Stories of Struggle, Strife and Survival*. New Delhi, India: Sage Publications (2009) and she has a forthcoming co-edited book with Routledge USA, *Information technology, development and social change* (publication date March 2012).



Michelle Soucy recently joined Dalhousie University as the Event Planning and Communications Clerk for the Centre for Learning and Teaching. Michelle is responsible for the administration and event management of the Centre's professional development conferences and workshops. In addition, in her communications role, Michelle will coordinate University-wide teaching awards committees, maintain the Centre's website, and desktop publish the Centre's newsletter.

Prior to joining Dalhousie, Michelle graduated from the University of New Brunswick where she completed her Bachelor of Arts. She then continued to get an Advanced Diploma in Human Resource Management from the Nova Scotia Community College. While completing her undergraduate degree Michelle worked at UNB's Centre for Enhanced Learning and Teaching as part of a Work-Study program. As a student assistant, Michelle worked on various projects such as coordination of teaching awards and organization of the Centre's workshops as well as the STLHE conference, which was held at UNB in 2009. Michelle looks forward to bringing her experience from UNB and her Human Resources education to the Centre and to being a part of enhancing the practice and scholarship of learning and teaching at Dalhousie University. Michelle may be contacted at 494-6641 or at michelle.soucy@dal.ca.

Call for Proposals

Teaching and Learning with Technology Grants

The Teaching and Learning with Technology Grants are intended to encourage and support faculty members who are seeking new and innovative ways to incorporate technology into their teaching practice. Grants will be awarded to individuals and/or groups who can demonstrate how the project can benefit students' learning. All grant recipients will be required to share their project results with the wider Dalhousie community through the Centre for Learning and Teaching conference/workshops or through other dissemination opportunities.

Applications will be accepted for two types of grants:

A Type One Grants (\$2,001 to \$5,000) will be awarded for projects that involve course/curriculum design or redesign, affect a high proportion of students, and include a plan to evaluate the project outcomes. Priority will be given to projects that have the potential for application beyond a single course.

Eligibility: Full-time Dalhousie faculty. To optimize the long-term sustainability of the project, non-academic staff and part-time or sessional faculty members may be co-applicants but each project team must include at least one full-time faculty member.

B Type Two Grants (up to \$2,000) will be awarded for projects that provide direct learning benefit to students and have the potential for a long-term benefit in a particular course or program. (Examples of past projects include the creation of digital learning resources, virtual labs, multimedia productions, learning objects databases, online tutorials, and computer-based student assessment systems.)

Eligibility: Full- and part-time Dalhousie faculty. Limited-term faculty must have at least one year remaining in their contract term.

Please note: Preference will be given to projects that can be completed within one year and that can be fully funded by the awarded grant plus any necessary additional funding from other confirmed sources. The application process is intended to be user-friendly. Please download the application form from: www.dal.ca/clt. Please note the different requirements for different types of grants.

Deadline for applications: February 10, 2012

Dalhousie University Writing Centre Writing Connections

GRADUATE STUDENTS and FACULTY

The Writing Connections at Dalhousie listserv offers a place to share information and resources, seek advice, post research queries, and post announcements relevant to writing for graduate students and faculty.

To join, send an email to listserv@lists.dal.ca containing the following in the body of the text: 'sub listname firstname lastname'. For example, 'sub writing-connections-at-dalhousie Joe Smith'

For information about other writing related topics, please visit
<http://dal.ca.libguides.com/writingcentre>

Change One Thing Challenge

Attention Faculty, Instructors, and Teaching Assistants:

The Centre for Learning and Teaching challenges you to
Share your student engagement activities

3 - \$500 Conference Travel Grants will be awarded!

What?

An engagement activity that you developed within the last 24 months and that is still part of your current teaching practice.

How?

Describe a student engagement activity that has a positive impact on student learning in one of your courses. You may also provide evidence through student testimonies (not required).

Examples of Activities:

- Collaborative assignments and projects
- Undergraduate research experiences
- Service learning
- Community-based learning
- Capstone courses and projects
- Experiential learning
- Using technology to enhance student engagement
- Anything that works!

Benefits for the Winners:

1. Three winners will receive a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Grant for up to \$500 to support travel to a teaching and learning conference.
2. Winners will have the opportunity to present their activities at the *Forum on Student Engagement* to be held in January 2012 at Dalhousie University.

Your Submission Must Include:

- ✓ Why you developed your activity
- ✓ A clear goal for the activity
- ✓ The impact on student learning
- ✓ Less than 500 words
- ✓ Title, name, department, contact information

Criteria for Winner Selection:

- ✓ Rationalization for the activity within your teaching context
- ✓ Clear connections between student engagement and learning

Deadline: December 19, 2011



**DALHOUSIE
UNIVERSITY**
Inspiring Minds

For more information or to submit your submission please contact Deborah Kiceniuk, PhD, Associate Director, Centre for Learning and Teaching: 494-3808 or deborah.kiceniuk@dal.ca.



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