

SourceLink

Connecting MTSU Faculty

Fall 2008

Worthwhile Web	2
From the Directors	2
Fall 2008 Events	3
ShareFair '08	3
Learning-L: Be the First to Know	4
New and Improved Web Site	4
Get Naked and Rule the Classroom!	5
Creative Commons Licensing	5
New Books at the Center	6
Second Life: Teaching and Learning in the Metaverse	6
Second Life in the English Department	7
Advisory Board Members	8

Welcome!

SourceLink is a newsletter published by the Learning, Teaching, and Innovative Technologies Center (LT&ITC). Its purpose is to share information on learning, on innovative pedagogies and technologies, and on research. The newsletter also includes a calendar of workshops and seminars designed to support the teaching and learning goals of the MTSU community of educators.

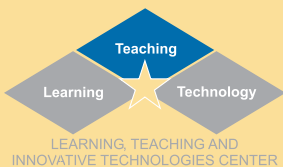
Your input is always welcome. We appreciate receiving news and inquiries about teaching tips, innovative techniques, or other relevant topics of interest to you.

Rewards for Faculty in Learning Communities

Ron Kates, English

Last fall, I joined a group of MTSU faculty and staff who came together to investigate faculty learning communities (FLCs) after having been inspired in a workshop led by Dr. Milt Cox of Miami University of Ohio. Generally, an FLC is an academic group with a purpose. It is composed of 6 to 12 faculty members and requires a commitment to meet, work, collaborate with colleagues on the FLC and disseminate the outcomes of the group's work to the academic community. For several months, we researched FLC structures and outcomes from nearly three dozen schools of varying sizes, locations, and demographic make-ups, and spoke to faculty about their experiences. Finally, in the spring, the group reached consensus: FLCs could have a transformative impact on teaching and learning at MTSU by engaging faculty in professionally and personally beneficial interactions with peers across campus.

FLCs would also benefit different types of faculty members and academic issues at MTSU. For example, our research showed that new faculty involved in FLCs were more likely to emerge as teachers, scholars, and leaders—in the process, bringing their newly acquired knowledge into the classroom as well as into discussions and interactions with peers. FLCs could also help reinvigorate senior and tenured faculty, encouraging them to share their expertise while, in turn, applying new approaches to older teaching methodologies. Because FLCs can cover a variety of topics ranging from integrating civic engagement across the curriculum to investigating different styles of teaching, classroom management, and assessment, faculty would have the freedom to take up only those issues relevant to MTSU.



Learning, Teaching, and Innovative Technologies Center

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cont. on page 3

Worthwhile Web— Why Reinvent the Wheel?

Why reinvent the wheel when designing a course, creating assignments, or looking for supplementary material? The two sites below connect you to faculty all over the world who also teach your course and invite you to review their approaches and materials.

<http://web.austin.utexas.edu/wlh/index.cfm>

The University of Texas–Austin maintains an award-winning site called the World Lecture Hall which publishes links to pages created by faculty worldwide who are using the Web to deposit course materials in



any language. You'll find materials for online courses, hybrid courses, and traditional courses. Over 100 courses in multiple disciplines include abstracts, syllabi, suggestions for audio and video with links, and more.

<http://cnx.org>

Connexions is an environment for "collaboratively developing, freely sharing, and rapidly publishing scholarly content on the Web." Its Content Commons includes educational materials for college students organized in small modules that can easily fit into larger collections or courses. All content is free to use and reuse under the Creative Commons license. Recently published: an introductory statistics textbook for non-majors.

cont. on page 4

Welcome back to the school year. We hope everyone had a great summer and that you've come back rested, with newfound energy for learning and teaching. Here at the center, we have planned an exciting agenda for the year, fully described on our new Web site at www.mtsu.edu/ltanditc. Be sure to click the new Calendar of Events link.



Barbara Draude



Faye Johnson

Our fall theme for the center's offerings is "New Environments for Learning."

We'll be exploring new ways to engage students inside and outside the traditional classroom. We started off with a First Tuesday Seminar, Adventures in Pedagogy, led by our delegates (one chosen from each college) who attended the Teaching Professor conference last spring. Each shared an overview of new ideas, methods, and techniques learned during the conference. We continue in October with Hybrid Course Design, a session looking at how to achieve the best of both worlds by combining the best of e-learning with the best face-to-face methods in all kinds of courses. In November, a panel of faculty experts will share how they have integrated e-games into their courses as an alternative environment for learning—from drill/practice individual player games to group activities to massive multiplayer online games (MMOG) to virtual environments for immersive learning. We're sure that each event will spark and ignite lively discussions and the sharing of ideas. We will continue the center's Teaching Excellence Series with workshops on course design and ways to reenergize your teaching. Remember, all our events are videotaped and used to build a learning module on the topic and can be accessed from our Web site.

As always, if you have ideas for additional events or topics, please do not hesitate to share them. If you would like to become more involved with the center as a presenter, a future teaching or research fellow, or a newsletter or teaching tips contributor, please contact the center at any time. You may choose to contribute to our changing Web site as well—we are looking for faculty to share their expertise in areas of teaching and learning by developing a topic for our new Teaching Resources area. Sharing ideas and skills with colleagues is a surefire way to ensure that MTSU remains a top pick for today's college students.

The LT&ITC is here for you: to support, intrigue, inform, and challenge you to continue to grow in your passion for learning, teaching, and innovative technologies. We invite you to spread that passion to your students and your colleagues and to share it with us. Have a great semester! We hope to see you at as many events as possible.

Barbara Draude and Faye Johnson
codirectors

Learning, Teaching, and Innovative Technologies Center

Fall 2008 Schedule of Events

Topic	Presenter(s)	Series	Date and Time	
Course Design	Rebekah Alexander, Elementary and Special Education	Teaching Excellence Workshop	September 10 11:40 a.m. – 1 p.m.	
Adventures in Pedagogy: Report from the Teaching Professor Conference	Lynn Hampton, Sociology and Anthropology; Nate Callender, Aerospace; Joon Soo Lim, Mass Communication	First Tuesday Workshop	September 16 11:40 a.m. – 1 p.m.	
Picture Perfect Generation: Visually Simulated or Visually Literate?	Susan Metros University of Southern California	WEBINAR	October 6 Noon – 1 p.m.	
Hybrid Course Design	Karen Ward, Nursing Barbara Draude, ITD	First Tuesday Workshop	October 7 11:40 a.m. – 1 p.m.	
America's Popular Music Online: Innovative Course Design	Steve Rossini and Dr. Benjamin Smith, Hibbing Community College	D2L WEBINAR	October 21 3 – 4 p.m.	
Classroom Assessment Techniques	Robin Blackman Computer Information Systems	Teaching Excellence Series	October 23 11:40 a.m. – 1 p.m.	
ShareFair: annual exhibit of innovative teaching methods	15 exhibiting faculty members (see Web site for details)	A Showcase of Teaching Practices	October 29 10 a.m. – Noon; 1 – 3 p.m.	
Using E-Games in Your Curriculum	Gilbert, Seipel, Roy, Hopper, Draude*	First Tuesday Workshop	November 4 11:40 a.m. – 1 p.m.	
Developing Community Partnerships to Achieve Service Learning Outcomes	Robert Kronick UT-Knoxville	Showcase	November 7 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.	
How to Merge YouTube with D2L	Marsha Beal Andrews University	D2L WEBINAR	November 18 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.	
Enjoying Teaching and Staying Motivated to Teach	S. Cliff Ricketts Agribusiness and Agriscience	Teaching Excellence Series	November 21 11:40 a.m. – 1 p.m.	



Brown bag event. * For the latest information about our fall events and to register, visit our Web site—www.mtsu.edu/~ltanditc—or call 494-494-7671. Missed an event? Check our Web site to view a learning module on the topic.

Rewards cont. from page 1

In closing, we should consider the longer term impact of FLCs on MTSU's faculty and the overall campus community. Indeed, as Andrea Beach, who runs FLCs at Western Michigan University, maintained during a phone interview, ultimately it's about the students, and FLCs keep the doors open to all who care about teaching—they're a means to a positive and invigorating end.

Resources: The center has a new subscription to the *Learning Communities Journal*. See our Web site, www.mtsu.edu/ltanditc, for additional information on FLCs, including how to start one, or just suggest a topic.

ShareFair—Peeking in the Class Next Door



The 2008 ShareFair will be held from 10:00 a.m. to noon and from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., Wednesday, October 29, at the Learning, Teaching, and Innovative Technologies Center, Peck Hall 106.

The ShareFair showcases the innovative teaching and technology practices of some of MTSU's most outstanding faculty members. Last fall, faculty exhibitors talked to guests about their success trying podcasting, experiential activities, multimedia presentations, online job fairs, and simulations as part of their courses, showing how these approaches actually worked.

About 15 presenting faculty members in this year's ShareFair include ITDC grant and fellowship recipients; winners of the Outstanding Use of Instructional Technology Award; Outstanding Teacher recipients; and finalists for the Teaching, Learning, and Technology Roundtable's Award for Innovative Excellence in Teaching, Learning, and Technology.

Preliminary presenters and their exhibits include

John Pennington, Psychology
Development of Research Methods Instructional Media

Steven Jones, Psychology
Interactive Online Lectures

Ellen Garrison, History
Integrating Video Instruction and Course Management Software

Tom Brinthaupt, Psychology
Enhancements to the RODP Personality Course

cont. on page 7

Join Learning-L, Be the First to Know



Worthwhile *cont.*

www.grantselect.com/

If you want money for an academic project, search the database of GrantSelect. "Offering more than 10,000 funding opportunities and the largest collection of sponsored research opportunities, GrantSelect is the most effective and comprehensive tool available for any grant seeker," the site boasts. If you subscribe, it will keep you up-to-date on any new sources of funding in your area.

GrantSelect™
the practical online grants resource

New, Improved *cont.*

tional issues and professional development. Visitors can use our site efficiently—zip to our most popular areas, get the information, and be done.

A more resourceful, connected Web site. Through hyperlinks, the center has laid connections to information all over the online academic landscape—to sites with tips, tutorials, research, and opportunities that could make a big difference to a faculty member.

The center revamped its Web site with faculty in mind, envisioning the kind of site that busy faculty would appreciate when searching for advice on course design, trends in syllabus preparation, or tips for spicing up a lecture format. By providing the most current information on such topics and by pointing users to appropriate campus resources and experts, we hope to set a standard among teaching and learning centers for the amount and quality of support faculty members can rely on.

If, last year, you forgot to subscribe to *Learning-L*, our monthly digest of teaching and learning information for MTSU educators, you missed hearing about news, techniques, and career opportunities of importance. Now improved, *Learning-L*, delivered by e-mail, will include

First to Know/First in Line. Learning-L members enjoy the privilege of priority registration for all LT&ITC events. Last year, over 300 faculty members signed up for our workshops and webinars on such topics as visual learners, discussion techniques, learning spaces, and the syllabus.

Insider Info. Timely, up-to-the minute news on publishing opportunities, internships, grants, teaching tools. Staff at the center are always scouting for information that would be helpful to your growth as a professional and as a teacher.

Teaching Tips. Practical, class-tested, innovative pedagogical methods to make your courses vibrant and effective. What is inkshedding? How does one lead a lively, online class discussion? What kinds of experiential activities work in 19th-century British lit? What's better than PowerPoint? How can I use a rubric?

Irresistible Resources. We keep up with news about new educational organizations, the latest research, innovative Web sites, and intriguing books. Maybe you don't have time to prowl the Web, evaluate sites, and bookmark them—but we do—as part of our mission to support faculty.

It's easy to join—e-mail us at ltanditc@mtsu.edu or sign up on our Web site at www.mtsu.edu/~ltanditc.

www.mtsu.edu/~ltanditc:
New, Improved, and Informative!

The Web site for the LT&ITC is now more functional, interactive, and resourceful than ever. Visitors instantly will notice a number of improvements:

Events are described in more detail. Loaded with information that can be easily downloaded and printed, the new events calendar provides enough detail to allow faculty to choose events appropriate for them. For the first time, faculty can register on the Web site, ask questions in advance, and provide feedback for all workshops.

Navigation that's easier; information more quickly accessed. A clearer design, more logical layout, and improved navigation helps make our Web site an invaluable resource for faculty wanting information on educa-



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Get Naked and Rule the Classroom!

by Randy Livingston, *Journalism*

A few weeks ago, I was asked to contribute a story to the premiere issue of a magazine (that I'll not name here). As an author of *The Adobe Illustrator CS3 Wow! Book* (Peachpit Press), I was asked to write about my process of creating an illustration. As I'm inclined to do, I wrote about the whole process, including my failures and struggles with the new features of the software. When the editor read my first draft, she commented on a specific paragraph, "Randy, just not very keen on this... undermines your authority. You need to sound like someone who's on top of the latest stuff."

Of course, authors and professors are supposed to nurture the illusion of being on top of the latest stuff, aren't we? That's a big part of the gig—that showmanship. That's one way we attract those we wish to teach. We engage in a method of scholarship and "follow the rules" to maintain the appearance of complete mastery in our field. We might do this out of a sense of duty, obligation, pride, and perhaps to avoid feelings of guilt. But what happens when one builds a whole identity on "obeying the rules" and trying to "be perfect?" This results in a barrier... an "us against them" mentality. Students are repulsed, and learning suffers.

“More than anything else, our teaching will benefit from our transparency.”



You see, research shows that students are generally more skeptical and jaded than generations before.

In their lifetimes, they've been saturated with marketing and image-building. Indeed, they know all too well how to create and nurture an image (e.g., a Facebook profile). They immediately recognize and even expect hypocrisy. It is just a part of life for them. They really couldn't care less about the self-image you've fashioned as a scholar and

professor. They know that you're neither as perfect nor as good as you claim to be.

The April 2007 cover of *Wired* magazine featured the headline, "Get Naked and... Rule the World." The story explains, "Smart companies are sharing secrets with rivals, blogging about products in their pipeline, even admitting to their failures. The name of this new game is Radical Transparency, and it's sweeping boardrooms across the nation."

What is a scholar? A professor? A teacher? What is learning and higher education? Forget the rules. Get over yourself. Our passion for inquiry and scholarship should be the catalyst. More than anything else, our teaching will benefit from our transparency.

Resources:

To read the *Wired* article, go to www.wired.com/wired/archive/15.04/. See our teaching resources for engaging students on our Web site, www.mtsu.edu/ltanditc.



Randy Livingston

Creative Commons Licensing— What Is This?

If you've ever used Flickr, or authored a blog, or posted a paper, a video or an audio work, eventually you've wondered about protecting your intellectual property once it appeared on the Web. Creative Commons is a nonprofit corporation that can help provide copyright protection for Internet materials. It encourages you to share your work but provides a way to control how it is used and how you are credited.



As the Creative Commons Web site puts it . . .

Creative Commons defines the spectrum of possibilities between full copyright—all rights reserved—and the public domain—no rights reserved. Our licenses help you keep your copyright while inviting certain uses of your work—a "some rights reserved" copyright.

Teaching students about academic integrity should include a discussion on Creative Commons that explains how it is used to protect creative output on the Web. The Creative Commons site is an extremely informative resource for educators. Find it at www.creativecommons.org.



New Books at the Center

The LT&ITC library maintains an up-to-date collection of materials on teaching, learning, and professional development topics. In addition to books, faculty members will find periodicals and handouts organized according to topic; e.g., course design, assessment, online teaching, and tenure. To determine whether we have materials you're looking for, visit www.mtsu.edu/~ltanditc and click on Resources. Below are three titles recently added to the LT&ITC library.

On Course: A Week-by-Week Guide to Your First Semester of College Teaching

by James Lang

In this practical, 300-page guide, Lang advises new college teachers how to manage their first classes and succeed as teachers. The guide is organized from the first to the last day of an academic year. Topics address the syllabus, lectures, discussions, assignments, and grading. In the tone of compassionate mentor, Lang coaches new teachers on clothing, drop/add, and late assignments and presents tips to help new teachers take command and not look foolish.



Life on the Tenure Track: Lessons from the First Year

by James Lang

Another effort aimed at new faculty members, this book uses life lessons to ensure that new faculty do and learn what they must to gain tenure. Written like a chatty diary

Jackie Gilbert, Management and Marketing

Many of you have probably heard of the virtual software called Second Life (SL), a highly colorful and interactive example of a MUVE, a multiuser virtual environment. SL is different from earlier game-focused MUVEs; with this metaverse, educators have found innovative ways to enliven learning as never before—to help students experience the past, permit them to conduct research and test theories, to see and experience what was never possible before. SL offers a variety of lectures, teaching techniques, and locations dedicated to creating a rich learning environment for its users, and an opportunity for educators to garner ideas for the classroom. A recent article in *Innovate* shows how SL encourages constructivist learning principles in which students “construct their own understandings through interaction with their teachers, peers, subject matter, and environment.”



To get an idea of how SL is being used on college campuses around the world, check out the popular site Educational Uses of Second Life at <http://sleducation.wikispaces.com/educationaluses>, which features cutting-edge applications from a variety of educators. These include

- “hallucination rooms,” where visitors can experience a small cameo of what schizophrenics see as reality;
- Harvard University’s Berkman Island, where visitors can watch mock trials or take a seat in the lecture hall to hear guest lecturers, both scholarly and popular (for example, Mia Farrow speaking on the atrocities in Darfur), address topics that were once available only on the Harvard campus; and
- the University of Notre Dame’s Sophia Island, where a faculty learning community has been established to explore how SL can improve teaching and learning across the curriculum.

“With Second Life, you can take students on a tour of the Sistine Chapel or to the utopian community of Brookfarm to visit Nathaniel Hawthorne.”

One of the most powerful features within SL is the ability to take students on virtual field trips to visit countries and other cultures. Sweden has, in fact, constructed an SL “virtual embassy,” in which visitors can

obtain information about Swedish culture and history and the process to obtain a visa.

A more recent development involves SL “virtual reality,” where real life pictures are superimposed within the virtual environment. This allows instructors to create more realistic walking tours of things like archeological sites,

Second Life: cont.

geographic locations, and even the inside of a red blood cell. Because of its ability to simulate environments and places, SL can provide avenues for experiential learning and immersion which might not be possible within the real-life classroom.



*Second Life Classroom
at the English Village*

Resources:

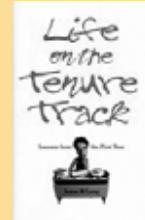
<http://www.secondlife.com>; <http://sleducation.wikispaces.com/educationaluses>; Nov. 4 LT&ITC workshop on e-games; *Second Life: The Official Guide*, an authoritative handbook for using the site; Excellent Innovate article, "Mediating the Tensions of Online Learning with Second Life," available from center by request.

Second Life in the English Department

Last year, Dianna Baldwin, a former instructor in MTSU's English Department, designed a hybrid course in freshman composition. On Tuesdays, students attended traditional text-and-lecture writing classes. On Thursdays, Ms. Baldwin met with students on a private island in Second Life. Why did Baldwin introduce her students to a virtual world to learn writing? "Many of my students were local and had never been outside of Tennessee," she said. "They often complained of not having anything interesting to write about."

So Baldwin's students began to travel the world online. One of her students found a community of like-minded religious musicians. A foreign student cured her isolation by discovering other Japanese students in the United States. Other students discovered an island devoted to the Harlem Renaissance—its music, literature, culture, and politics. Slowly, she noticed that her students' writing changed from labored, self-conscious pieces to writings reflecting their excitement and discoveries—the focus and purpose had shifted to the experience from the process.

A recently formed group is discussing the implications of Second Life as a teaching tool and recommending policies for developing an MTSU Second Life presence. If you are interested in participating, please contact Barbara Draude at bdraude@mtsu.edu.



of the author's first year, *Tenure Track* coughs up some funny insider tips, from why it's unwise to dismiss your class early on the

first day with just the syllabus to handling the protocol of departmental meetings to how to respond to bad student evaluations. Some of this is very funny, particularly Lang's war stories about his struggles teaching, which remind us that even outstanding teachers have to work very hard to get students talking.

Teaching Your First College Class

by Carolyn Lieberg

This is a practical handbook for new faculty, adjuncts, and TAs. In encyclopedic fashion, it covers everything a new college teacher needs to know—how to handle cheating, how to prepare for discussions, how to make homework work for you, and how to interact with a range of student types. Lieberg offers solid, common-sense tips about speaking in class and helping students learn.



All books are available for borrowing at the LT&ITC. Let us know if you come across any other materials we should stock.

ShareFair cont.

Beverly Boulware,
Elementary and Special Education
*Developing Online Literacy Lessons
for Instructional Purposes*

All presenters will be announced on our Web site. E-mail ltanditc@mtsu.edu for more details.

**Learning, Teaching, and Innovative
Technologies Center**

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2-43600

We're on the Web!
www.mtsu.edu/~ltanditc

New Advisory Board Members

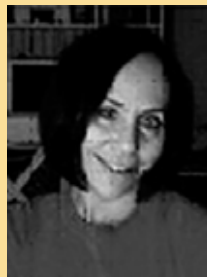
Every year, LT&ITC directors meet with the advisory board to discuss accomplishments and challenges and set a course for the future. Serving on our board is just one of many ways to become involved in shaping a precious faculty resource. Do you have an idea or opinion that could help the center execute its mission to create a community of faculty who develop, improve, and integrate creative and effective use of appropriate pedagogy and technologies to enhance student learning? If so, let us know about it!

The center is pleased to announce three faculty members who will be joining our board to advise us on how we can best support the teaching and learning efforts at MTSU:

Randy Livingston, Journalism

Arthur Ford, Psychology

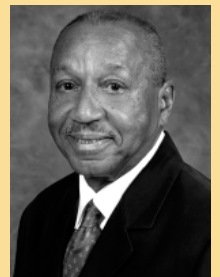
Dorothy V. Craig, Educational Leadership



Dorothy V. Craig



Randy Livingston



Arthur Ford

Our annual meeting is October 23, 3:30 p.m., in Peck Hall 106. We hope you'll share your thoughts on how we can better support your teaching and learning goals. For more information on our advisory board, including a complete list of its members, visit our Web site at www.mtsu.edu/~ltanditc.