In this edition, you will find some of the contents you read in the May, 3013 newsletter: that edition was published very late in the semester, and I don’t want readers to miss some of the content, and it contained information about ongoing projects, which this edition will update.

As we did in that previous edition, the OTLC honors Sandy Burns, Mischelle Stone, Katherine Harris, and Ali Konieczny for their contributions to online teaching and learning. Please see pages 2-5 for information about these outstanding Ferris employees.

One of the focuses of that previous edition and this one is the comparison of online to face-to-face courses. A 2010 Department of Education evaluation of over 1000 studies comparing courses delivered online and face to face found that “Students who took all or part of their course online performed better, on average, than those taking the same course through traditional face-to-face instruction.”

The OTLC is in the process of comparing the final grades of approximately 8200 students over the last four years in online and face-to-face sections of ENGL 321 and of ENGL 325, courses with respectively the highest and the fifth-highest online enrollments at Ferris. The results of Phase 1 are now being analyzed by the OTLC and the Languages and Literature instructors involved in the study. Based on those findings, which will be published in the next edition of this newsletter, we have made some preliminary decisions about the direction we would to take in Phase 2. Please see page 6 for those decisions.

The theme of third annual Online Courses Fair, to be held in FLITE on February 19 and 20, will be comparing strategies used in online and face to face courses. Please see page 7 for additional information about the fair; we urge all those interested in online to participate or come to the fair!

Next, on page 8, you will learn of three of this year’s initiatives of E-MAT (E-Learning Management Advisory Team) as well as some changes in online location of information about e-learning at Ferris.

And finally, on page 9, find out about an initiative of the Desktop and Classroom Technology Standards Committee that will benefit our students.

And kudos to Ferris for being included in the top 35 online colleges that are revolutionizing online education! We were 13th on Affordable College’s “Best Online Colleges. Go Bulldogs!

~Elaine
When I first met Sandy, we were serving on the Online Class-Size Committee, trying to hammer out a satisfactory formula that would work for all classes in all programs. We did devise a formula that I, and probably almost everyone else, have forgotten, but I do remember Sandy. She was, and still is, a passionate supporter of the fully online BS in Dental Hygiene.

With the help of an instructional designer, she and others in Dental Hygiene and Medical Imaging mapped out all the courses and objectives beforehand very carefully, and then went fully online with the Dental Hygiene Bachelor Completion Program in the fall of 2008. Since then, the program has been a tremendous success, outperforming competing programs at the University of Detroit, Mercy, and the University of Michigan.

Sandy got interested in online when she took a sabbatical in 1996-97 to get a degree in nursing and found so much of the work was on a computer. When she returned to her Dental Hygiene students, she found that they just didn’t have the computer skills she now realized they needed. So that first year she began teaching them typing, word processing, engine searching and so on; the next year she motivated them to learn Excel because that’s the way they had to keep track of their grades. And so it went until they were able to pull together case-based presentations involving various computer-related media.

Here is just a sample of Sandy’s extensive online contributions to Ferris:

2006-2012 FerrisConnect Advisory Board
2010-2011 Online Class-Size Committee
2008-2010 Fully Online BS degree in Dental Hygiene –First Student-Designed and Created Fully Online BS; Curriculum Approved by FSU Senate/CFTL
2007-2009 University Advancing Online Task Force
2006-2008 FerrisConnect Vista-Certified Trainer FCTL
2006 WebCT Vista 4 Specialist–Program and Exam Completed
   Mastery of Key Competencies in Design and Teaching in Vista 4
2005-2006 Online Learning Committee
2005 Best Practices in Student Services Online Conference
   Higher Learning Commission–Chicago
2005 Designer/Developer Mixed Delivery Course
2005 Lilly North Conference–Michigan
   Presentation: Computers in Education
2004 Innovations in Higher Ed–U. South Carolina
2004 Computers on Campus National Conference–Orlando
   Presentation: Computers in Education
2004 WebCT Best Practices–FSU FCTL
2003 WebCT–Impact User Conference–California
2002 Distance Learning–Online Committee Member/UCEL
1998-2000 Return from Sabbatical-Integrate Computer Skills into Every Level of Dental Hygiene Course Work

As Sandy looks forward to the next online challenge, she thinks of her online BS program and her students first: “Now we have to get people to know who we are,” she says. “We do get good feedback from our graduates.” Sandy notes that Dental Hygiene and Medical Imaging doesn’t advertise, except by word-of-mouth...but then, that’s the best kind of advertising there is.

~ Editor
Mischelle Stone

When Mischelle showed me her criminal justice course during last year’s Online Courses Fair, it was as if I had entered a whole new world. Well, I had…virtually. Students didn’t so much enter that course as enter a town—with people, storefronts, houses, hydrants, sidewalks, light poles—a community where all aspects of the criminal justice system could be found.

Creating a town online was no exceptional feat for Mischelle. In fact, when she was at Michigan State, she was part of a grant project for creating a virtual university. That project was where her interest in online began, although initially she didn’t want to be part of it all: “I was a reluctant convert,” she says.

That was fifteen years ago, and as Mischelle says, when the project was complete, “The students hated it.” It was too new, too advanced. Although students are familiar with virtual worlds now and with a lot of the other things we do online, she does find that they want everything in all their online courses to look the same and be in the same place for every course.

Michelle and I were discussing various ways Ferris students and faculty might compromise on the similarity of all course designs when she told me that she had been the Director of Instructional Technology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. I then learned how that university made a commitment to online and created a fee structure that essentially paid for its online courses and provided incentives to the departments and the faculty. So when Mischelle came to Ferris in 2009, we not only got a CJ professor but also someone with the skills of an instructional designer and an administrator. Good for us!

Here are just a few of Mischelle’s many accomplishments related to online:


Publications:


Presentations:


Teacher Training and Development:

- Completed “Quality Matters at FSU: Integrating the Quality Matters Standards into Your Course” program. February 8, 2012-April 11, 2012.
- Completed the “Educating the Net Generation” training. UAB, July, 2006.

During our brief discussion, I got many useful ideas from Mischelle that E-MAT, OTLC, the Department of Languages and Literature, and others will be hearing about soon. Thanks, Mischelle!

~ Editor
Katherine Harris

Katherine and I served on the first-ever Online Teaching Committee in the Department of Languages and Literature, but not until we spoke on the phone a while back did I learn that she and I became interested in online education because we had been teaching computer-assisted writing courses. Back in 1991 at the University of Nebraska, she began using computers for online support in the University’s first writing center. Then as a graduate student at Florida State University she introduced her students to the Daedalus Integrated Writing Environment. Later, at Thomas University in Georgia, she used computers in developmental writing courses, and when she came to Ferris in 1999, she had a strong foundation in how computers can bring composition and writing skills to our students. Soon she began teaching online and found that if computers and writing instruction are a perfect fit, then online education and writing instruction are even better than perfect!

For student writers, “the online digital world is so open and rich in possibilities and in ways to share,” Katherine says. Incorporating the digital world in the classroom is “an incredibly powerful approach to teaching writing.” Katherine also believes “the digital world can showcase classical rhetoric better than some texts.” For example, what better places for students to learn how writing varies with audience and purpose than for them to see those differences as they write in blogs, wikis, chat rooms or even emails? Online, she can also “stage manage” events, such as “writing along” with her students, thereby illustrating so much about the writing process that they simply can’t understand by reading about it: it’s not done perfectly the first time—and it probably shouldn’t be if the writer is to focus at first on ideas instead of on correctness. It is “meaning making”—a creative and exploratory act. Observing a PhD making errors in this process can free students to just let go and begin composing with creativity and experimentation, thereby increasing their confidence and understanding of their own skill sets.

Katherine notes that the online and the face-to-face worlds are actually merging, or perhaps some long-held views of student/instructor contact are reversing. More and more face-to-face courses now have online support, and, as Katherine does, many online instructors give their online students more attention than they give their face-to-face students. Now she is struggling with setting appropriate boundaries for her online students since they often text her on weekends.

Of course an instructor must learn a lot of technology and many strategies specific to online before he/she can hope to begin teaching an online course effectively. And the learning never stops. Just last year Ferris changed its LMS, which required a tremendous amount of retraining by everyone related to online, certainly by online instructors. Technology is always changing, and certainly professionals always want to be better professionals! Katherine’s next goal as an online instructor is to learn to use Adobe Connect, a conferencing software, so she can grade an online student’s paper while he/she watches and while they discuss what she’s doing.

Katherine is quite modest about her achievements related to online education at Ferris, but I did manage to find out that she was part of the first wave of teachers to begin teaching totally online classes at Ferris and that she has been teaching a good portion of her load online ever since. She has presented at computer and writing conferences and has given several presentations at Ferris about creating community online.

Thank you, Katherine, for being such an excellent colleague in the Department of Languages and Literature and such an ardent supporter of online education at Ferris!

~ Editor
After Librarians Stacey Anderson and Emily Mitchell both told me that Professor and Librarian Ali Konieczny was an outstanding contributor to online education at Ferris, I was intrigued to learn how she made her contributions from FLITE. Then when Ali and I spoke, I soon learned how. As Health Sciences Librarian, she wants to be sure that the students in Allied Health, which has such a strong online presence, are well supported by FLITE. For example, students in Ferris’ fully online Nursing MS, which is the number-1 such program in the U.S., are required to take a library tutorial on research, and she presents this tutorial in webinars. She tries to meet as many of these students online as possible because once they have met her, she finds they are more likely to contact her later on if they need help. She not only enjoys this wonderful opportunity to meet students, but she also enjoys the sense of community that these webinars establish in these groups of students.

Upon request, Ali also embeds library services in a course. Among these are adding content to a course directly, monitoring an online discussion board on research, offering live webinars in a course through Adobe Connect, adding research tutorials along with related quizzes that students can take and email to their instructors, and meeting individual students online and showing them how to find certain resources in the library. And she will do it all with a gracious smile! Ali encourages faculty to contact their college’s FLITE liaison if they would like any library services embedded in their courses.

When Ali was in graduate school, online education was in its early stages, but she did take several online courses, which has given her a dual point of view that some of us in online education wish we had too. Seeing courses from the students’ point of view is perhaps one reason that Ali is willing to host a webinar for an instructor even if only one or two students need her help.

Here are just a few of Ali’s contributions to online education at Ferris:

- Provision of embedded librarian services in select online classes, 2007 – present.
- Provision of library content for online courses without embedded services, 2007 – present.
- “Enhancing Asynchronous Online Classes with Audio Files and Webinars.” Presentation given at the Lilly Conference on College & University Teaching (Sept. 24, 2010). Presenters Marilyn Skrocki and Alison Konieczny.
- “Interprofessional Collaboration in Online and Blended Courses: Course Instructor and Librarian Cooperation”. Presentation given at the 2009 Ferris Spring Learning Institute and 2009 Lilly North Conference. Presenters Marilyn Skrocki and Alison Konieczny.

Thanks for all the help you give our online students, Ali!

~ Editor
In spring, 2013, the OTLC initiated a four-year comparison study of the online and face-to-face sections of both ENGL 321 and ENGL 325. The final grades, including W's and F's, of approximately 8200 students were compared and analyzed. These data, which comprise Phase 1 of the study, will be published in the next edition of this newsletter.

In September of 2013, seven of the instructors in the Department of Languages and Literature whose courses were involved in the study reviewed the data collected in Phase 1, discussed the implications of the data, and, upon my request, determined the next phase of the study.

My colleagues decided that because more students received W’s and F’s in the online than in the face-to-face sections, the goal of Phase 2 of the study should be to improve student success and retention in our ENGL 321 and ENGL 325 online courses.

They further thought we should apply this goal to all our courses, whether online or face-to-face. However, I will initially limit the study’s goal to online ENGL 321 and ENGL 325 and later, as is feasible, generalize the results obtained to our other courses.

The Fourteen Objectives of the Study

These instructors then established the following seven objectives that I should complete, with their help, to improve student success in online ENGL 321 and 325, to which I have added seven objectives of my own (which are italicized):

1. find the D’s earned in the courses in the study, in addition to the F’s and W’s we already have
2. find the cumulative GPA’s of the students involved in the study because cumulative GPA is the single best predictor of student success in a course
3. consult with others on campus who are working on retention and gathering data on W’s, D’s, and F’s
4. review the literature on comparison studies I have already read and read additional studies that focus on writing courses
5. find examples of successful online writing courses and programs in which student retention and final grades are high
6. contact representatives of these courses/programs to determine the strategies responsible for such success
7. consult not only with faculty involved in the study but also with other department faculty who teach online; engage all interested department faculty in the goal of improving student success in our online sections; in department meetings, small group meetings, and one-on-one discussions, distribute the study materials information gathered; seek input on ways to achieve the goal of Phase 2 of the study.
8. make informed lists of negative and positive variables affecting student success, differentiating those specific to online courses
9. identify those variables over which instructors have some control
10. devise strategies for ameliorating the problems that have a negative effect on student grades
11. begin implementing those strategies in our online courses
12. devise an instrument for measuring the effect of the changes we implement in our classes, ask faculty to use the instrument, measure the success of the changes, and share that information with all members of my department
13. write a paper that details Phases 1 and 2 of the study
14. share the results of the study with my department and the university. Publish the paper in the newsletter of the Online Teaching and Learning Committee and in other venues

I will begin collecting research in the summer of 2014. In fall 2014, faculty will meet to identify variables affecting student success in online courses and to devise strategies to help students overcome these problems; and in spring, 2015, faculty will trial the strategies in their online courses. We welcome your suggestions and comments on this study.
The third annual Online Courses Fair will be held on February 19 and 20, 2014 in FLITE 112 and 114 From 11:00 am to 1:00 pm

The Fair’s theme this year is

*Comparing Online and Face-to-Face Courses: Strategies and Challenges*

This year, in addition to presentations by faculty of their courses and presentations by various online-related Ferris organizations, we will also have brief demonstrations of online course technologies.

More information about the Fair will be available in the next edition of this newsletter.

If you would like to be part of the fair—as a presenter, a facilitator, or sponsor—please contact Elaine McCullough at mcculloe@ferris.edu.

COME TO THE FAIR!
EMAT Priorities for 2013-2014
Deb Thalner

Last Year:
Over the past year, EMAT and various departments across campus worked diligently to improve the quality of our online courses and programs. With the 11 EMAT recommendations (approved in 2011) as the guide, many accomplishments were made, some of which are listed below:

- Information Technologies expanded access to the Technology Assistance Center (TAC) to a 24/7 operation.
- MyTechSupport and MyFSU sites now include the maintenance schedules for FerrisConnect, so that faculty can plan accordingly.
- A common course template was developed to simplify the design for those instructors interested.
- A set of Ferris netiquette guidelines was developed and is available for faculty to incorporate into their courses as needed.
- An Online Readiness Orientation/Tutorial for students to take prior to their first online course was piloted and implemented.

Next Year:
In the next year, additional focus will be on the following areas, which are all tied to various EMAT recommendations:

1. Develop a plan for compliance with state and federal regulations, as well as HLC and other stakeholders (State Authorizations; ADA; Last activity date for financial aid; Student Identification)
2. Develop a plan for collaborative online course review.
3. Development of a Ferris course for potential online faculty that addresses the pedagogical issues associated with teaching online. This course would supplement the current courses FCTL has for the technical issues (Blackboard) of teaching an online course.

To learn more about the EMAT recommendations or the current priorities, please contact Deb Thalner at thalnerd@ferris.edu.

This November:
The Online Learning website pages, including links to the EMAT priorities and meeting minutes, will soon be moving. The OL pages have been listed under Academic Affairs>Initiatives>Online Learning. Soon they will also be found under the “Online” webpage under “Faculty/Staff Resources.” This is all in an attempt to provide greater visibility to the pages and the initiatives that are underway. In addition to EMAT information, the website will also include copies of approved online policies such as the Student Online Readiness policy. Also available will be links to other pages at Ferris that support online learning, such as the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning and the E-learning office, as well as documents of use to online faculty, such as the new FerrisConnetiquette” guidelines and the OTLC newsletter. Look for this new selection on the online page sometime in November!
The Desktop and Classroom Technology Standards Committee is in the process of posting a site where students can go to find information about software/hardware recommendations and requirements for their personally owned computers.

The committee would like to know more about how each academic program informs students of these requirements and if there is an interest to make this information available centrally from the committee website.

Click here to complete a short questionnaire to assist the committee with moving forward with this initiative.

The Online Presence of the OTLC

You can find out about us at our Department address:


You can find our newsletters at our Academic Affairs address:

http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/administration/academicaffairs/online/otc

You can find our Facebook page and our blog here:

http://www.facebook.com/onlineteachinglearning/
http://onlineteachingandlearning.wordpress.com/

(Both were created and are monitored by our Chair, Jon Taylor.)

About the OTLC Newsletter

L and L on Line is published twice a semester by the Online Teaching Committee of the Department of Languages and Literature, Ferris State University. Its purpose is to keep members of the Department and others at Ferris apprised of issues affecting our online teaching. Your contributions and suggestions are welcome. The editor is Elaine McCullough, ASC 3077, x5875, mcculloe@ferris.edu.