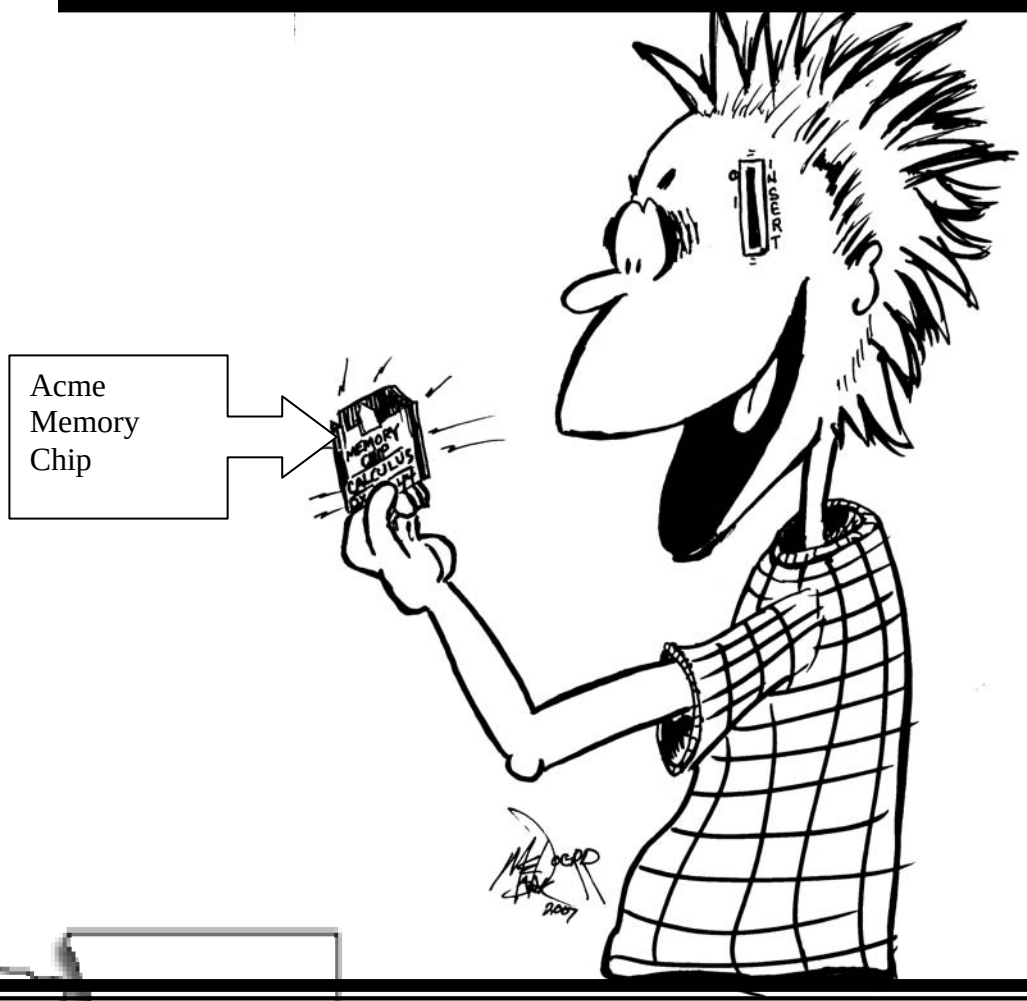
TECHNOLOGY: THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY



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TEACHING UNDERWATER

By Jill Stukenberg, Clark College

It was a peculiar sound for any room filled with people—sustained silence. Like a DJ's, it's many a teacher's worst fear: dead air. Yet, I stood in a computer-equipped classroom in front of eighteen writing students who were happily, strenuously engrossed in discussion; it was only one without me in it. I uncapped a dry-erase marker and pressed it to the white board. *1) Post your research topic in the form of a question. 2) Respond to at least two students' topics.* The knocking of the fingertips on keypads increased in both density and urgency. If I ever lost my voice, I began to think, this could be my go-to activity. If I ever held class underwater, this might be what it would feel like.

I had previously complemented face-to-face classes with the Blackboard course management tool mainly to outfox the student excuse of "not getting the worksheet." On my morning drive, I hit on the idea of students at individual computers posting to the discussion board during class time. It was the first week: briefly, I wanted to introduce Blackboard, and prompt students to think about their upcoming papers. We were still getting to know each other, and I was still trying to sell them on a research paper writing class. And somewhere outdoors, it was a sunny Friday. Now, as I walked down the rows, my shoes squeaking more audibly than I like them to, I watched the small but furious movements of my students' fingers and decided to extend the activity. Let's do ten more minutes, I said—loudly. I could have been talking to myself in an empty room. This could be my go-to activity, I thought, if I ever had to teach as a ghost.

A minute later, I peeked over a shoulder to see what was happening: twenty-five research paper topics had materialized on my discussion board. One student finally had a question. Where was the spell check feature? I didn't know, I said. Let's look. Before I could find it, a student nearby leaned over to show us. I wasn't really expecting you to spell check—I, English teacher, almost said. *Dreams. Suicide. Alzheimer's Disease. Plastic Surgery.* The topics

alone seemed to swirl and rotate. To click on any revealed the swarming flies of further questions: *"What are the factors in our daily lives that influence the way we dream? Is there a way to change the way we dream by changing what we do?"* Like fungi, posts grew: two posts, eight posts. In this weirdly silent room, twenty-five conversations were apparently happening at once, and without me. In fifteen minutes of class, my students had 111 total things to say, and growing.

Finally, one student looked up to find me, lifting her head and squinting as she searched around the room. "This is like an educational version of MySpace, huh?" She smiled slyly. She kept her fingers on the keyboard.

When I was a teenager—not in an era before computers, but certainly before social networking via computer could have been thought cool by anyone, much less teenagers—I was a member of a synchronized swim team, not that *that* was cool either. In synchronized swimming, in addition to developing the techniques to tread water without bobbing and with both hands above your head—or both legs above your head—one had to count with the music, hold one's breath, peer through chlorine to keep track of teammates, and always have on hand a good waterproof mascara. As with most sports and performances—as with anything, I began to learn—our real work went unseen. For performances, kaleidoscopes of kicking legs and twirling bodies were designed to appear as if effortless to viewers above water, sitting in the bleachers. Underwater, each swimmer hung upside down, holding her breath and counting alone, squinting alone through the chlorine, encased in a thick, shimmering, chemical blue.

Momentarily that sunny Friday, the in-class Blackboard discussion revealed the working underside of my classroom. It flipped it inside out and upside down. Normally external, singular and seemingly unified, "a class discussion" was shown as an internal, quickly multiplying, and diversely experienced thing. A new technology might not change what students have always learned in writing classrooms; but, in this case an online synchronous discussion laid bare the mushroom roots where the discrete, private messiness of learning grows, and how it grows: through mysterious, half-blind, and unique, personally-felt underground connections. Perhaps also revealed: the classroom truth of nineteen people sharing one space and yet existing at the same time in a multitude of separate worlds—bobbing briefly together, and then breaking away.

THE READY MADE AUDIENCE

Jason Nix, Spokane Falls Community College

Like most teachers, at least those who are honest enough to admit it, I think rather highly of my abilities in front of a class of live students. Give me a classroom full of students who are at least halfway awake, and I'll get them discussing topics and arguing about the subject matter at hand. I might even get that guy in the back of the room with the sweatshirt hood over his head and the surly look on his face to respond to my question in a way that gets other students to agree or disagree with what he has to say.

Sure, college instructors are often hired based on their research abilities or publishing history, but the main thing we really have to offer students is our ability to direct classroom discussion so as to bring solid, relevant responses out of students unaccustomed to speaking in front of a group. They don't tell you this in grad school, but those of us who are uncomfortable in front of a class of live bodies won't last long in this profession.

This was true, of course, back before 1994 or so, those dark ages before the Internet came along to change the way college instructors do business. This was before online classes, after all. Programs like Blackboard and WebCT promised to change the way students interacted with one another at the same time they were to transform the role of the teacher. But have they, or are we simply adapting what we already knew how to do in the classroom to an electronic medium? What about the students? Is the guy in the back of the class -- the one sending text messages to his buddies about how drunk he was the night before -- suddenly going to become a dream student simply because we allow him to take classes on the same computer he uses every day to check the number of friends he's racked up on myspace?

Surely not. Or will he?

Online classes have been around for long enough now to give us an opportunity to evaluate the kinds of adaptations teachers must make in order to excel in the online environment. Many of us have also racked up enough experience to help us define what kind of student might excel (or struggle) within the sometimes alienating world of cyberspace. Some students, for example, might have their lives forever changed by their first experience of having an instructor coax them to speak in front of the class, especially if this instructor follows through with praise for the student's contribution to the class. I'll never forget the shift that occurred in me as a student when a well-respected instructor began to call on me for my opinion, treating what I said as a launching point for his own analysis of the material. One

could easily imagine parallels between this ability to speak in class and the future "team player" in a professional environment.

But what of the virtual classroom, with its complete lack of face-to-face human interaction? Is the kind of blossoming I speak of above is limited to the bricks-and-mortar learning environment? How, for example, could the student show her academic prowess without demonstrating the gleam in the eye reserved for those confident in their mastery of the material?

I would argue that, while there does exists something in the classroom environment that all who wish to call themselves college graduates need to experience in abundance, the online classroom environment offers something equally important, something you cannot duplicate in the traditional classroom. Whereas the traditional classroom gives students the opportunity to speak before a live audience, the online environment gives student a ready-made audience for his writing and a means to be published, often for the first time. Just as the shy student can cower behind a desk in order to avoid speaking in front of a group of his peers, so to can the timid (or, conversely, unjustifiably-confident) student writer hide behind written assignments read only by an overworked composition teacher or an inexperienced graduate teaching assistant.

If my time spent writing for daily newspapers has taught me anything, it's that one pays very close attention to every word when one realizes that people who aren't paid to do so will read the final product. There is one truth to writing lost on those who've never made their living by the pen: when an audience exists, the writer will produce. Further, when a critical audience exists, the writer will produce at a higher level.

The idea of a built-in audience is one thing the online environment brings that cannot exist in an in-classroom peer group. I first experienced this as an Auburn University undergraduate in 1994 on a primitive BBS bulletin board. Our instructor set up "Virtual Paris," an idea equivalent to the discussion board on Blackboard, yet years ahead of its time. By the instructor forcing us into a situation in which we read and commented on other students' work, he created a community of writers, even though none of us had before written for any audience other than our teachers. That made all the difference in that class, and it can in ours today.

Writing for an audience is messy business, and the positive and negative reactions we received proved much more valuable to many of us than the artificial praise our classmates gave us when we met later in the classroom. After all, people responded on these boards more often than the minimum required. The classroom, on the other hand, is often full of students eager to get out of the room and on to the next class (or kegger, as the case may be).

If any online classroom environment is to be truly as beneficial as we have been led to believe it can be, then it must find ways to foster both praise and criticism from an audience untrained in the art of constructive criticism. If the democratizing power of the Internet and of online instruction truly exists, then it is to be found in the space where people can stop being classroom nice and start being typing-in-the-pajamas real.

SUCCESS OR INSANITY

J. Salas, Olympic College

In the busy course of a quarter,

from getting students advised into classes, to getting classes underway, a faculty is probably significantly impacted by technologies that either lend to their success, or contribute to their insanity.

I teach ground, hybrid and online courses. I rely on WAOL BlackBoard as the hybrid/online platform and use Microsoft Office and other specialized accounting software. I'll take paperless any day!! From online registration to online course organization, it is THE way to go. Don't think that technologies, however, don't have negative moments. WAOL BlackBoard has worsened throughout the years, given their systems, stretched thin, are trying to accommodate growth without growing their systems. While I realize MONEY is the root of all evil, it is a sin to offer programs via WAOL when they suffer because systems have been cut back to reduce cost, and increasing traffic isn't accommodated!! Even the Australian round-about offers more solutions than BlackBoard! Our institution has begun to consider our own system, but alas, it may just be discussion since an internal license is very expensive. What to do, what to do? Some faculty, savvy about various information systems and software, do their own thing. My hats are off to those folks who, realizing the limitations they live within, capitalize from their own knowledge and capabilities. But I must stay within the structure and bite the bullet if I want to continue to attempt to stay flexible with distance learning.

While I think I've finally mastered, to suit my needs of course, Microsoft Office 2003 and Windows XP, now discussion is on the table about when to transition to the new MS flagship, Office 2007 and the MS Vista operating system. While I've had opportunity to gain a sneak preview, I'm not thrilled with HAVING to learn these new applications with no compensation at all!! Yeah…I know, I know; it's all part of keeping current and staying state-of-the-art!! As a professional and technical faculty, I question how often history and math has changed in comparison to office and systems technology, and wonder just how much of this my academic colleagues HAVE TO adapt to in order to continue doing what they are currently doing?

I believe faculty has to be motivated and inspired by change to seriously adapt to new technologies and continue to incorporate them into the classroom. Let's face it: the way of our world in the future will be technologically based. I'm just trying to stay in line (never a step ahead!!) with change, and rely on the local Information Technology office, the Center for Faculty and Staff Development along with various associations throughout our state and nation that sponsor technology training, and other related activities, e.g. distance learning..

U TUBE AND FLICKR *(sic)* FOR NOOBS

Lee Sledd, Tacoma Community College

These popular websites make me think

of a colleague who probably would not know them- and neither would her students. How about you? Have you heard of or visited or even become hooked on these websites? If you admit to the latter, you probably noticed the (phonetically correct) misspellings. If you said to yourself, "Isn't it YouTube and Flickr?", a gold star for being up on the ever-changing fads of the internet- for what that's worth. As an ESL instructor in Basic Skills, I would like to reflect on what I see and how I feel about teaching and learning with technology.

Not all instructors surf the web recreationally; just as not all instructors watch TV or have cell phones. On one level, our relationship to media and technology is obviously a personal lifestyle choice. Choosing less technology does not mean that newbies ("noobs") are dummies. But on another level, it affects how we relate to our students, who often seem to remain young each year as we grow, er, wiser. Most of them are 'plugged in' or 'wired'; and those who are not most often belong to a financially and digitally deprived minority. In either case, we need to have some digital fluency.

Tacoma Community College has technology featured prominently in college-wide learning outcomes. You would be hard pressed to find a college that didn't make such a statement- and, naturally, put it on their website. At TCC, we are currently working on developing program-level outcomes and implementing evaluations. One symptom of our tech fever is that we expect even our basic skills students to use their email. I expect this outcomes assessment process will lead to action in the classroom, on technology among other things. But at many institutions where I have worked, I am sometimes unsure that policy documents and evaluations really touch instructors- especially part-timers and those at satellite sites- or their students, aside from imposing another form to complete. And in the case of technology, if that is what our lofty goals become, then we will have failed our students.

Each quarter of inaction on technology competence is a missed opportunity in a world where full literacy includes technological literacy, where even waitresses and mechanics are doing data entry on PCs. Like them or not, computers are here to stay. I don't think any instructor would deny that reality, yet it is difficult to get everyone on board. There are still many classes where students do not get to use technology. What do you see on the ground at your institution? Maybe you see classes where no computer work happens; or, we hope, classes

where wonderful computer activities happen; or perhaps, teachers and students having unsuccessful experiences trying to use technology because they have a mandate to do it, but are struggling. My guess is most of us can see a bit of all three.

One example: our college recently adopted PLATO, a suite of internet-based learning modules primarily aimed at ABE/GED learners. Like many computer-based learning resources, PLATO provides a staggering selection of content, and tracks user progress. PLATO has received rave reviews from some of the early adopters, mixed reviews from some instructors who have struggled to implement it (or simply not invested the time needed to learn how), and pans from ESL instructors and those who perpetually confess that computers befuddle them. And, as with all computer gizmos, occasionally even the pros find that some lessons simply crash, or results refuse to save, perhaps because it's Monday, or the stars are not in alignment.

All of this is to be expected with any new technology- and with computers in general. One of the hardest things to accept and to teach about computers- in the Windows PC universe at least- is that they often don't work as advertised. Web pages don't load. Software plug-ins or drivers need to be updated. The network is down. The software crashes. The computer freezes. Error messages pop up about something you have done which is somehow 'unauthorized' or- this one seemed to comment on my personality- a request containing an 'offending command'. The frequency with which users need to refresh, restart, reset, log off, power off and on, read the help file, or otherwise put out fires is difficult to accept even for seasoned users. For those of our students or instructors who are new users, these issues can often turn them off to computers entirely. We need to make sure we have back-up strategies not only for our lessons, but also for our attitudes toward the machines, in the interest of providing positive mentorship for those of our students who, pity them, are less tech-savvy than their instructors. I feel it is not enough to use computers, but that we actually need to have enough exposure to grow enchanted with their power- because, like the old-fashioned book literacy, that hook is what leads to continued, lifelong learning. We must strive to infect others with the tech bug; but to do so effectively requires that we carry it ourselves.

First, credit where it is due. Our college offers great training and support for our instructors; but somehow it still isn't enough. This is no surprise given that technology use is a behavioral change; perhaps no less than a lifestyle change. Extension educators, charged with teaching newly-researched methods to farmers, developed diffusion theory to describe the spread of new ideas in a population. They termed the eager beavers 'innovators' and 'early adopters'. These folks are the ones you see up and running with each new program within a quarter or two. But meanwhile, we have failed to convert the 'laggards'. These are instructors with a wealth of experience and knowledge who have barriers to becoming users and teachers of computer-assisted learning, because they themselves lack the basic skills and confidence- and thus, the interest. The skill gap and/or generation gap results in an emotional barrier, namely a dislike of computers, which cannot be hidden and may unfortunately be passed on to students. As an educator, I try to avoid asking students to do anything I am not willing to do myself. And so, for their sake, I renew the call to my colleagues and to our institutions to do more.

Do more to learn the new trick on the block; do more to support your colleagues on a day-today basis; do more to encourage them to attend classes and update their skills; do more to provide support in the halls, or even by team teaching; find and use rubrics to check up on teacher and student skills; use syllabi and observations to set expectations and check up on the use of technology in classes. Those instructors who are not yet comfortable, full-time and part-time, on-site and off-site, need sustained assistance and training. And most importantly, each instructor should seek to integrate technology into class as a regular, expected tool rather than a separate, special burden. Repeat after me: "Of course we use computers in class. It's not that hard. Try it, you might like it." It's just another case of Green Eggs and Ham. I don't believe there is any shortcut for the hard work that we are undertaking; and despite my enthusiasm, I have not arrived yet. My students are not, at this moment, infected. But I am not giving up; there must be another way to make magic between those whirring boxes, glowing screens and hungry minds. I do believe that our collective efforts toward our shared goals will pay off for our students.

One final note: YouTube and Flickr may not immediately strike you as sites built for education- content may vary. But for all you newbies (cuter than 'laggard', isn't it?) I would suggest paying them a visit. Consider using video, in particular, for an easy introductory lesson to draw new students into using computers. Consider the ridiculous-even regarding work time. Learning need not be drudgery; computers need to be fun to pay us back for all the headaches so they can keep us clicking into the brave new world.

Love it and hate it – the conundrum of techno-cool

By Paul Haeder, Spokane Falls Community College

It's the bane of a writer's existence,

the You Tube mentality proliferating amongst students and faculty alike -- as if those amateurish videos are somehow equal to or better than the drama of Sam Shepherd or Eugene O'Neil. What about myspace? Some newfangled the antidote to critical thinking. And those instantaneous flash videos better than the poetry of Sapphire or Galway Kinnell?

Nah, most of the so-deemed artistic products of the techno-world are just the sort of pabulum the modern world needs less of.

So what do community college instructors do, then, when everyone's tied into "Tool" or Ani DiFranco on their Ipods and MP3s while writing persuasive essays on why the Bush Administration is light on human rights and the Geneva Convention?

What do we do with this technology in the composition classroom when survey after survey and our own in-the-trenches experiences have been telling us students aren't reading

novels, short stories, poetry and non-fiction, and they're certainly writing at the remedial level in larger numbers?

Sure, the libraries of the world are facing a huge dilemma – use it or lose it. Imagine that, libraries with no periodicals – ProQuest has more or less taken over that realm. Libraries with fewer and fewer books because our mentality these days is to use the Internet to get our down home research projects done.

Yeah, the computerized classroom – as a form of collective word processing – works okay for students in need of some time typing a project. But these "e" portfolio facilitators, and these administrators and instructors hooked on the latest technological software, much of what they are inadvertently doing is taking away some of the interpersonal skills students need in education.

Marshal McLuhan said it right when he commented on the boon in media technology: "As technology advances, it reverses the characteristics of every situation again and again. The age of automation is going to be the age of 'do it yourself.'"

In a large sense, I also believe what McLuhan said about education, that it is a "civil defence against media fallout."

Unfortunately, what I see at my school and at other campuses is a rush to buy into every conceivable software, hardware and upgrade program imaginable. It's a system that feeds into the unsustainable concept of planned obsolescence, once allowing the media – Madison Avenue, more specifically—to call all the shots in conceptualizing our individual and collective consciousnesses.

We need to reshift the narrative frame away from what Bill Gates and all the overpaid flash video technologists believe should be the source of our cultural context – computerization of the galaxy – to something more grounded.

Yeah, I utilize a computerized classroom, as a way of providing word processing to students. Yeah, I deal with classes en mass via list serves, or sometimes with Blackboard. Yeah, the overhead projector is cool when showing the class a movie like "The Future of Food" or "Broken Limbs."

It doesn't take a genius to plug in a DVD or to remove and replace some hardware on the computer.

The problem is we have begun to buy into what the huckster sales reps and our overpaid administrators believe to be a testing ground for the newest and latest technology – schools.

John Tudor said it best about the feedback loop that technology creates by its mere existence: "Technology makes it possible for people to gain control over everything, except over technology."

We can use it – technologies like Geographic Information Systems, GPS or powerful computer-based analyzers – effectively, and in many ways, as a sustainability coordinator looking at global systems tied to climate change, carrying capacity and water shortage, and the newest alternative energies, I consider some parts of technology as a driver in that arena.

Studying the micronutrients and moisture levels of a plot of land in rotation for a sustainable organic crop is certainly easier with incredibly powerful computers.

But the nitty-gritty of biology – of which I am most familiar in the area of science – and of the arts -- as in communication arts (poetry, fiction, composition, drama, journalism) – is done on hands and knees and with the sleeves rolled up and paper and pen in front of you.

In many ways, those of us that have been teaching since the early 1980s have learned to work with the latest technologies, to create wildly popular Power Point presentations and to use our artistic eye with a 10.1 mega pixel digital camera. Yet at the same time, many of us also embrace what Albert Einstein said way back in the 1930's about the dehumanizing effect technology has on our culture: "It has become appallingly obvious that our technology has exceed our humanity."

Is that just true of hydrogen weapons or the weapons of the Bush-USA occupation of Iraq?

Or have we lost that community building edge by relying so much on technology to teach, to wow and to entertain?

I've seen too often the lust and addiction in the eyes of students and friends so keyed into the latest toy or tool coming out of our consumerism-driven world. The conversations seem couched in the lingo of the technologists, the cell phone providers or plasma TV sales pitchers.

This thing called technology is blunt and has its own inertia to it, one that seems destined to divide and conquer those who say "enough is enough" and those who propose that technology is the new "spiritual blessing," the way we as a civilization can squirm out of global warming and providing food to the 1.2 billion people who are either starving or are undernourished.

Thomas Carlyle said it right in 1850: "Technological progress is like an ax in the hands of a pathological criminal."

ANGELS AT THE KEYBOARD

Karen Kearcher-Joiner, Lower Columbia College

A shift in my teaching paradigm began last June when I accepted the position of coordinator of the distance-learning LPN-to-RN option of Lower Columbia College's nursing program. Suddenly, I was propelled from the traditional classroom into the world of online education. I embraced this challenge, knowing that this would be a savvy career move as an educator. I could see that distance education is likely to continue to grow exponentially. At LCC, the number of students and instructors using our online course management system, ANGEL (A New Global Environment for Learning) has vastly exceeded our initial expectations. When we purchased ANGEL in August 2004, we thought we might someday have 1000 users. Today, every student at the college has an ANGEL account, and 2/3 or more of the students use the system for at least one course every quarter.

Catching the online education wave meant quickly learning the basic skills. I had previously begun preparing myself for this new sport by enrolling in a series of three ANGEL courses for instructors offered at our college, but I had yet to complete them. Suddenly, I had a new impetus to do so, as I found I had to simultaneously "learn and do" as I started the monumental task of reorganizing the entire online LPN-to-RN nursing curriculum….online.

Having a dedicated online-education-instructional-design-and-support person has been crucial to navigating these waters. His number is on speed dial! Like a prowling barracuda, I am known for tracking him down wherever he may be on campus. So, as I play in this water,

"ANGEL Support" is my life-preserver to keep me afloat when I flounder. There is something comforting in seeing those words on my caller ID. Don't we all need Angel Support? As I have gained comfort and experience with the ANGEL system, I have learned how to trouble-shoot the issues more effectively on my own, seeking answers to questions like: "Why oh why is the grade book showing zeros for theses quizzes and not the others? Why does the student not see the same grade I do? Why won't that link work for the student when it works for me? Where DID that powerpoint go? Oh no – did I REALLY delete that whole file and there is NOT an 'undo' button??" and other assorted splashes of trouble with online course management.

My colleagues are concerned about my over-attachment to my office chair, keyboard, and computer monitor (of which an upgrade to a 17 inch flat screen was greatly beneficial to my eyes). I have put in a request for a more ergonomically-correct keyboard and mouse after suffering tender pressure points on my wrists and hands. That is a draw-back of online; the classroom allows for more movement, animation, and calorie-burning!

Online interactions with students have a different flavor than face-to-face conversations. An interesting paradox exists; I am more removed physically from my students, yet more accessible one-on-one. Online students are much quicker to send their thoughts, opinions and questions about quiz and test questions. Sometimes, so much so, that one colleague likened answering all their emails to "swatting mosquitoes!" As other distanced ed colleagues before me have noted, the discussion boards online tend to be more candid and "equal" than face-to-face class discussions, as the social skills quotient is removed when all have the same access to the "floor" and the attention of others. Typing one's thoughts also allows time for reflection, review, and revision - luxuries that the spoken word lacks.

Challenges of online education are both similar and different than face-to-face. Motivating students and involving them in the learning process crosses modes-of-delivery lines. Presenting information in meaningful ways that engage students is more difficult online; one cannot just take the classroom notes and post them online and expect students to engage, as there is no personality in the front of the room to hold their attention. Creativity and adaptability need to be alive and well in any delivery mode if we are to keep our courses vital and inspiring.

Email and discussion board etiquette ("netiquette") becomes a critical subject when teaching online. Students need exposure to the basic niceties of communicating in writing, and the things to avoid – like ALL CAPS WHEN TYPING. When non-verbal emotive cues that usually accompany the spoken word are not available, the potential for miscommunication increases dramatically. How written messages are received is less predictable without the accompanying non-verbal qualifiers.

These days it is the online written comments of students that make me smile, rather than seeing, in-person, the flash of understanding cross their face as they experience an "ah-ha!" moment. My colleagues have learned to accept that I giggle to myself now and then in my office as I read. This is not due to hearing voices, but simply reading them!

Student's voices often reveal that they do not come to an online course with the level of computer skills necessary for successful navigation of this mode of delivery. This often puts them behind, and intimidated, before the course even begins. An orientation to the institution's

course management system facilitates the student's comfort and abilities with the on-line environment. I learned quickly not to assume that my students know how to read or send email, or send an attachment; these basics are covered in an "Introduction to ANGEL" session.

For me, the rewards of teaching on-line parallel those of face-to face instruction: the thrill when a student shows understanding, embraces the subject matter, or completes an exemplary work. I am learning how to better deliver content, inspire learning and motivate students from a distance. I do miss the immediate stimulation and gratification of face-to-face communication in the traditional classroom, but every change in life has both gain and loss attached. My advice is to embrace on-line education if you dare or desire. This modality is here to stay, but those of us who cannot embrace it may not be.

A special thank you to Scott Dennis, aka "ANGEL Support," for his valuable contributions to this article and for being the Life Preserver (sanity preserver is more like it). And, a big thank you to my colleague in nursing, Jeanne Hamer, for encouraging me to splash in these waters, because she went first!

DRIVING DIGITAL

Mark Doerr, Spokane Falls Community College

What is in control, the technology or the people who use it?

Suppose you go out to your car early one morning, open the door, get behind the wheel, put the key into the ignition and fire her up. Instead of just starting, the dashboard lights would blink on and off. This might happen for, oh, thirty seconds. Finally, all the appropriate lights would be on and the engine would then start.

Maybe.

Maybe, but you might get a signal that the car can't find the engine. You ask yourself, "What the hell? I had an engine yesterday."

What to do? Shut it down and go through the start procedure all over again.

This is all happening because this car, your future car, is made by the people who make computers, and following the computer model, this is what starting a car would be like. If you were lucky enough to have a car that could "find" the engine and the engine started, then you would put it in gear.

And a little message would light up, a message inside a box, black letters on a gray background: "Are you sure you want to go in reverse?"

You would have to push a button that says yes.

Once you back up, you'd have to tell the car, yes, you now want to go forward. And off you go. Except when you want to turn left at the corner. If you had a car that works like most computers, it would make you type in a password in order to turn left. "Oh crap," you might say if your vocabulary was particularly gentle this morning, because now you have to remember the left turn password which has to contain at least six characters including at least one number, one symbol and one capital letter.

At the next corner, yes, you have to turn right, but guess what. Today is the day your right turn password expires and you have to type in a new password. And until you do, your car just shuts down while you dream up a new password that you think you might be able to remember.

Sorry, tohellthis#&%%m@ch!ne is taken.

Ah, so your password is now changed. Start your car again. Yes, wait for the blinky lights and the icons to appear and disappear then reappear in a different place.

Oops. Error message: Syntax error 81D07.

You hit "help", but system is frozen. And now there are three cars behind you, honking. You grab the owner's manual. It says nothing about Syntax error 81D07. You push the Ctrl Alt Del buttons that are inconveniently located just above your glove box, and after many light blinking seconds, Syntax error 81D07 appears again and the machine is frozen.

You use your cell phone to call tech support. A voice answers: "Thank you for calling. We appreciate your business. Pease wait until an operator can assist you."

After being on hold for two hours (87 cars are backed up behind you; drivers are cursing you, telling you to perform improper acts with your pets), a live voice comes on the line. "May I help you?"

You ask what the hell Syntax error 81D07 is. But, sadly, you are disconnected and have to call back. You hear sirens in the distance, but police are blocked because 50 cars behind you have stalled thanks to hardware, software and programming errors. The bad news is that help lines are jammed solid, so you can't get through to that help line person in India.

But they can put you on hold. A recorded message tells you over and over to go to the company's website for an answer. You promise that if you ever get to a computer, you will send them a message telling them what they can do with their pets.

Finally, you get through to a human.

"Hello sir. May I help you?"

"I have an error. Um, it just came up and my whole system shut down. My car won't start."

"What is the error, sir. Can you read it for me?"

You tell him you can't remember the error message. It has been five hours after all.

"Oh, dear. Well, tell me this. What is the model number of your car?"

"It's a Buick."

"Yes, but we need to know which model number. Tell you what. Turn the car over and look at the eight digit number on the bottom."

"Turn my car over? It's a friggin' Buick I tell you. Godzilla couldn't turn this thing over."

"Sorry. I'm used to advising people with laptops. Can you crawl under the car and look at that little white tag. It should be between the I-O input and the lubricant storage system."

"The what?"

"Er, the oil pan."

You crawl under the car, find the tag, read it. By the time you crawl out, you can't remember it because the human mind can only remember a series of seven characters, and all the computer people who now manufacture cars purposely use eight digit numbers. You crawl back under the car where it is as dark as the lowest level of Hell. You crawl out, find a flashlight in the trunk, crawl back and scratch the serial number with your fingernail in blood on your palm.

You get out, pick up the phone. Disconnected.

Five hundred cars are backed up behind. Helicopters are trying to find the cause of this mess, but it's late. They're worried their memory might run out so you have time. Six hours later, you get through again.

"Hello sir, may I help you."

In a voice ragged with stress, you read the serial number.

"Ah, just follow these directions. Lift the system power center cover . . .

"The what?"

"Uh, the hood. Then unhook the power . . . er . . . battery cable. Have you done this sir?"

He repeats the question and each time you squeak the words, "I'm working on it." Finally, you get the cable loose and tell him.

"Good. Now wait thirty seconds, then hook your battery back up and you should be able to reboot your car."

"But it's dark. I didn't make it to work. I probably got fired."

"Pardon? Oh, sir. I was just checking something. You might want to upgrade the program on that particular automobile. The old program is vulnerable to viruses and the new Vista program for Buicks is recommended."

"Really? Is it better? Will it work with my old car software?"

"Um, I don't know."

"Who knows?"

"Nobody knows, but try it. What's the worst that could happen?"

THE FACTC FACTS

Faculty and President/Chancellor Salaries At Community and Technical Colleges and Districts in Washington State

Washington Community and Technical Colleges
FY2006-07 Full-Time Faculty Average Salaries Comparison

District	Average Salary	Average Starting Salary	Masters w/13 yrs Experience	Highest Salary	Lowest Salary
Bates*	48,621	49,811	55,667	85,358	35,451
Bellevue	54,251	49,443	58,572	60,320	37,596
Bellingham	54,986	53,574	55,737	63,220	53,574
Big Bend	47,804	45,622	50,693	54,932	41,057
Cascadia	50,704	45,971	51,000	59,188	43,300
Centralia	50,596	51,882	45,337	61,743	38,795
Clark	51,227	41,154	51,923	62,400	40,733
Clover Park*	44,430	47,074	68,174	68,174	44,175
Columbia Basin	48,200	41,817	43,317	74,870	37,200
Edmonds	52,273	49,085	52,243	58,205	39,984
Everett	48,377	43,139	46,684	61,484	42,284
Grays Harbor	49,080	41,256	42,985	56,002	32,679
Green River	52,803	51,233	54,216	57,707	36,831
Highline	54,649	48,196	55,223	69,863	45,463
Lake Washington	48,653	47,188	55,187	59,326	39,835
Lower Columbia	51,647	45,487	46,138	60,789	39,301
Olympic	50,557	47,916	42,927	59,765	34,342
Peninsula	53,453	50,756	44,346	59,806	36,969
Pierce District	47,645	40,669	46,704	63,577	40,092
Renton	49,910	48,043	59,058	63,251	31,833
Seattle District	49,418	45,542	46,372	59,644	42,223
Shoreline	49,746	50,594	52,443	59,840	39,496
Skagit Valley	51,529	46,512	52,665	58,323	41,924
So. Puget Sound	50,539	43,894	43,894	63,187	43,894
Spokane District	50,445	42,475	47,490	62,290	40,080
Tacoma	53,202	48,000	53,000	72,544	39,000
Walla Walla	51,513	41,550	44,450	61,156	38,995
Wenatchee	50,932	46,488	55,754	55,754	41,980
Whatcom	45,359	41,586	37,753	57,598	36,509
Yakima Valley	51,379	50,497	52,510	56,288	50,081

Legend
Top quartile #1
Quartile #2
Quartile #3
Bottom quartile #4

*Bates and Clover Park - majority of faculty on eleven/twelve month contracts and are included in the starting, highest and lowest salaries reported. However, the average salary includes only 9/10 month contracts

Part-Time Faculty Annualized Salaries 2007

Washington Community and Technical Colleges
Annualized Part-Time Faculty Salary Funding - January 30, 2006 updated 4/3/06
Part-Time Faculty Report as Required by ESSB 6090, Sec 603(9)

	FY2007 Average Annual-ized part time Faculty salaries*	**FY2006 Average Annual-ized part time Faculty salaries**	FY2007 Allocation For I-732 (COLA) Increases @ 2.8%	FY2007 Allocation For increments	FY2007 Match Equity	Local for increases**	FY2007 % salary Increase (total from all sources)
Bates	**$46,145**	$44,888	$16,000	$0	$0	0%	2.8%
Bellevue	**30,502**	29,442	233,000	40,700	51,623	30%	3.6%
Bellingham	**42,618**	41,336	32,000	3,900	0	0%	3.1%
Big Bend	**27,035**	26,222	39,000	5,000	11,600	55%	3.1%
Cascadia	**29,340**	28,686	45,000	9,100	0	0%	2.3%
Centralia	**28,287**	27,490	52,000	8,700	34,200	100%	2.9%
Clark	**26,355**	25,124	154,000	29,800	0	0%	4.9%
Clover Park	**31,792**	30,903	38,000	9,100	0	0%	2.9%
Columbia Basin	**22,423**	21,701	107,000	20,100	0	0%	3.3%
Edmonds	**31,237**	30,239	136,000	22,500	0	0%	3.3%
Everett	**31,140**	28,485	131,000	19,700	78,800	100%	5.3%
Grays Harbor	**24,624**	23,941	40,000	7,200	0	0%	2.9%
Green River	**28,610**	27,178	148,000	24,000	89,328	100%	5.3%
Highline	**30,447**	29,321	132,000	20,700	0	0%	3.8%
Lake Washington	**41,560**	40,651	92,000	13,600	0	0%	3.3%
Lower Columbia	**27,881**	27,095	43,000	6,200	0	0%	2.9%
Olympic	**25,350**	24,943	89,000	19,700	0	0%	1.6%
Peninsula	**27,906**	26,755	55,000	10,600	20,700	100%	4.3%
Pierce	**26,227**	24,649	94,000	25,900	29,020	30%	6.4%
Renton	**39,008**	37,653	59,000	8,300	0	0%	3.6%
Seattle	**39,384**	37,724	465,000	61,000	130,600	50%	4.4%
Shoreline	**33,228**	31,798	175,000	25,900	80,122	70%	4.5%
Skagit Valley	**19,975**	19,337	88,000	18,600	0	0%	3.3%
South Puget Sound	**28,547**	27,555	70,000	15,500	0	0%	3.6%
Spokane	**27,759**	27,158	235,000	45,300	0	0%	2.2%
Tacoma	**31,928**	30,938	130,000	23,000	0	0%	3.3%
Walla Walla	**25,790**	24,957	59,000	10,800	0	0%	3.3%
Wenatchee	**28,569**	27,471	63,000	12,000	47,000	100%	4.0%
Whatcom	**26,414**	25,310	64,000	16,500	18,500	100%	4.4%
Yakima Valley	**24,313**	23,536	87,000	16,600	6,220	12%	3.3%
System Total	**$29,911**	$28,801	$3,171,000	$550,000	$597,713	109%	4.2%

*These salaries are calculatied representations of how much part-time faculty would earn at each district if they worked a full-time load at the district's part-time pay level. Annualized average part-time faculty salaries are displayed as reported by districts.
**additional amounts to funds provided in FY2006

Presidents and District Chancellor Salaries

COLLEGE/DISTRICT	2005-2006 ANNUALIZED SALARY	Yrs of service present position	FY 2005-06 Annualized Salary	REPORTING RELATIONSHIP
Bates	$162,560	2	$160,000	Board
Bellevue	152,000	18	$150,000	Board
Bellingham	129,405	V	$127,369	Board
Big Bend	147,320	12	$145,000	Board
Cascadia	162,560	2	$160,000	Board
Centralia	145,115	5	$142,830	Board
Clark	130,000	0	$156,350	Board
Clover Park	165,000	1	$175,441	Board
Columbia Basin	167,714	12	$161,856	Board
Edmonds	170,000	11	$160,000	Board
Everett	167,600	1	$150,000	Board
Grays Harbor	141,549	2	$139,320	Board
Green River	152,767	24	$150,000	Board
Highline	150,000	Interim	$165,000	Board
Lake Washington	134,035	8	$132,275	Board
Lower Columbia	144,600	10	$135,139	Board
Olympic	160,097	4	$156,712	Board
Peninsula	145,000	6	$140,000	Board
Pierce-District 11	172,297	1	$169,750	Board
Pierce-Ft. Steilacoom	141,085	1	$139,000	CEO Multi-Camp
Pierce-Puyallup	141.085	1	$139,000	CEO Multi-Camp
Renton	141,180	6	$136,027	Board
Seattle-Central	134,130	4	$132,018	CEO Multi-Camp
Seattle-District 6	182,881	4	$180,001	Board
Seattle-North	134,130	6	$132,018	CEO Multi-Camp
Seattle-South	134,130	4	$132,018	CEO Multi-Camp
Shoreline	175,000	1	$145,000	Board
Skagit Valley	152,034	4	$149,640	Board
South Puget Sound	160,000	1	$138,300	Board
Spokane	130,477	3	$128,422	CEO Multi-Camp
Spokane-District 17	174,053	5	$171,312	Board
Spokane Falls	130,477	6	$128,422	CEO Multi-Camp
Spokane - IEL*	125,477	V	$123,262	CEO Multi-Camp
Tacoma	176,000	10	$156,000	Board
Walla Walla	147,320	23	$145,000	Board
Wenatchee Valley	151,384	2	$140,000	Board
Whatcom	136,408	23	$134,260	Board
Yakima Valley	118,400	12	$116,843	Board
***Institute for Extended Learning**				

	2005-06	2005-06	2004-05	
AVERAGE	**$149,612**	$145,884	$138,482	
MEDIAN	**$147,320**	$143,915	$134,750	

FACULTY ASSOCIATION
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Comments, replies, letters to the editor can be sent by e-mail to the following address: http://factc.blogspot.com/

FACTC is our Network

Faculty at Community and Technical Colleges in Washington State must be active in the discussion of important community and technical college issues. We network with each other, with other higher education organizations, with legislators, and with state board staff and administration. If your community or technical college is not represented at FACTC, we invite you to join us.

FACTC Focus is a publication of:
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