

## WEBCT USERS GROUP MEETING OCTOBER 29, 2004

In attendance at the WUG meeting : Tim Samuels, Mary Zimmerer, Sheila Merritt, Otis White, Richard Felnagle, Tom Shoemaker, Chuck Hall, Nancy Hellner, Laura May, Greg Pratt, Emi Ahn, Cheri Kinny, Liz Dorland, Donna Gaudet, and Peg Johnson.

### TOM SHOEMAKER AND WORLD RELIGIONS

Tom Shoemaker shared the World Religions (REL 243) class he instructs online for MCC. This course, which is open to the public, examines how various religions (e.g. Judaism, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism) answer the "big questions" in life. Click on this URL for some examples of issues Tom's course addresses:

<http://www.mc.maricopa.edu/~tomshoemaker/rel243/forum.html>

You can access Tom's course at

<http://www.mc.maricopa.edu/~tomshoemaker/syllabii.html>

Tom uses WebCT for two parts of his course - for surveys and for quizzes. His students take an opening and closing survey delivered via WebCT. These surveys help Tom assess the backgrounds of his students.

Surveys are created in WebCT just like quizzes. However, when a student takes a survey, their responses are anonymous. Credit for completing the survey can be entered into the gradebook however, as the instructor can see whether or not a student completed the survey. They just cannot see what specific responses a student gave. The students sees the responses as a group.

Tom uses WebCT's quiz function for quizzes on each unit. After students have completed assigned readings, they take a quiz on the material. Students retake the quiz if necessary until they earn a grade of 100%. If they do not earn a perfect score eventually, they cannot get any points for subsequent work on that unit.

In order to make the instructor/course seem more personal, Tom has incorporated several features:

1. short Quicktime videos of Tom talking/instructing. Tom videotaped these from his office so it makes it seem as though the student is visiting with Tom on campus. He includes humor to increase interest and make himself more "human".

Tom poses questions in his video. Students respond to these questions on the online bulletin board. The videos were burned to CD's. Tom mails the CD's to enrolled students along with a letter shortly before the semester begins. Tom cautions that if you decide to make videos, wear the same clothes each time you tape. Then if you later want to edit the tape, you can do it more easily.

*Note:* Now that he has created these videos, he uses them with his on-campus classes also. They watch the video in class and then begin their discussion.

*Adaptation:* Tom has a hearing-impaired student in his online class this semester who is fluent in sign language. The student could not hear the audio portion of the Quicktime videos he created. Special Services on campus provided a person fluent in sign language to sign Tom's videos. They put this on a CD for the hearing-impaired student and she is now able to understand the videos.

2. a choice of options on how a student will complete an assignment on various topics (e.g. links to discussions/presentations on National Public Radio <http://www.npr.org/> ), links to online TV videos (e.g. Dateline NBC <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/3032600/> ) , articles in Time magazine (<http://www.time.com/time/> ), or powerpoint presentations Tom has created.

3. having students submit a photograph of themselves to Tom. He prints a roster with each student's name and photograph and sends it to each student. Alternatively, photographs and information could be posted on a website if it were behind a password (e.g. within WebCT). Tom finds that in an emotionally-charged class like Religion, students are much more civil to one another in their bulletin board discussions if they see photographs of one another. It makes them seem more like real people, rather than just a name.

4. using Outlook templates to deliver individual emails to students as they submit their assignments without taking a significant amount of instructor time

Tom created a series of emails that can be automatically sent by Outlook to students when they submit a particular assignment. Using Outlook's Rules Wizard, Tom set up the "rules" in outlook so the student's assignment is filed in the appropriate folder for subsequent grading.

The rules also ensure that the appropriate email is triggered when a student submits an assignment with the proper heading in the title (to indicate what assignment the email is about). The headings are selected by the student from the pull-down menu in a form Tom created. (He is willing share this form. Tom's email address is [tomshoemaker@mail.mc.maricopa.edu](mailto:tomshoemaker@mail.mc.maricopa.edu)) This prevents the student from making a mistake in spelling or naming the heading so that proper email response is triggered.

For example, an email might say, "I received the assignment on .... from you. I'll be grading it soon. Look for your grade in the gradebook. Did you notice that .....? "

Tom used Outlook 2003 to create the email messages. He created the email message but did not put a name on it. He used the "save as" outlook template option.

From the student's standpoint, it appears that he/she has received a personalized response. From Tom's standpoint, it is one of many messages he created before the semester began. With the Outlook rules in place, the responses are automatically sent without his intervention. This leaves him much more time to address instructional issues in depth, rather than responding to bookkeeping tasks.

Tom also uses a form for students to submit problems. Many of the problems recur. So Tom's pull-down menu has options like "I can't find the syllabus quiz." or "I need to withdraw." or "I'm not sure what to do next." or "The videos have no sound." Tom has an automated response to many of these choices, which is controlled by Outlook as described previously.

## MELANIE KROENING AND WEBCT STATISTICS

Melanie shared a new CTL webpage that displays statistics on our students' use of WebCT on a monthly basis. See the data by clicking on this link: <http://www.mc.maricopa.edu/other/ctl/webct/webctstats.html>

## NEXT WEBCT USERS GROUP MEETING

What can WebCT do for your on-campus class? Come and see some interesting ways that MCC faculty are using this great tool to enhance their traditional classes! Deb Weberg and Bren Nielsen will share their innovative ideas with you.

What if you could have your students create presentations that could be posted on the web for other students in your class to view? They can!!! Donna Gaudet and Melanie Kroening will show us how to use the WebCT Presentation Tool for this purpose.

Mark your calendar for our next WebCT Users Group Meeting - **Nov. 19, from 1 to 2 P.M.** in the CTL workroom. [Click here to register:](http://ctl.mc.maricopa.edu/events/reg.jsp)

Peg Johnson