



# Faculty News You Can Use

Spring 2005

A collaborative effort of the Academic Support, Instructional Technology, and Media Library

## Collaborative testing: One strategy for increasing student mastery of material

If you want a method of assessment that can monitor individual student learning, but at the same time provide a learning experience to enrich students understanding of the content, you may want to try some collaborative tests or quizzes. In the collaborative method, students must first complete their own answers to an examination. Then in small groups (2-5 students) they compare answers, discuss options and choose their "official" group answers. The groups are randomly assigned and the collaboration is as brief or extensive as the assessment warrants. In all cases where individual vs. collaborative scores have been compared, there has been a statistically significant increase in the group scores (over individual scores.) But more importantly, both students and faculty reported that students really explored the material, discussed the questions, debated options and defended their knowledge.



In case you are concerned about slackers getting the benefit of more prepared students, in the 2 studies cited below, it was noted that "many students admitted to studying harder for collaborative tests, so that they would not let their partner down."(Lusk and Conklin, p.124.) It is also possible to use an average of both the individual and collaborative scores for each student.

Doing this once or twice in a course fosters the concept that learning is not finite (lifelong learning) and that using other people as a resource can increase your knowledge base (critical to functioning in a collaborative/integrative work setting,) Want to try it? I'm willing to help, Give me a call-x3123. (Judy)

Lusk, M. and Conklin L (2002). Collaborative testing to promote learning. *Journal of Nursing Education*, 42, 121-124.  
Mitchell, N. and Melton S. (2003). Collaborative testing: An innovative approach to test taking. *Nurse Educator*, 28 (2), 95-97.



## User Friendly Group (Course) Pages on NYCC Online

Do you have some of your course materials on your course Group Page on NYCC Online? In working with students in varying trimesters they have pointed out some things which cause them to have to wait for materials to load. These are some easy suggestions to make the course materials in the Photos and Files Section more user friendly.



- Some computers may not have the same word processor as you are using. Consider using "SAVE AS" file type of "rtf" (rich text format) so that most ANY computer can open the file. It is one extra step you must perform before uploading the file to the Files and Photos Section.
- Create the documents whether they are PowerPoint, Word, Excel or jpg, to post as ".pdf" files. There is a free website where you can create pdf files. The advantage of this method of posting is that someone is less likely to be able to save and "edit" the file as if it were their own. (See Liz for a write up on using this method.)
- PowerPoint XP allows you to "compress" all images within a PowerPoint in 3 easy steps. I have seen a file size reduced by 90% using this method. This means that the file will load faster on the posting as well as the viewing end. This does NOT degrade the viewing quality, but can affect the printing quality.
- PowerPoint transitions and effects take precious seconds to load. With PowerPoint XP you can remove all transitions and builds on a presentation very easily. This allows for quicker viewing of the PowerPoint

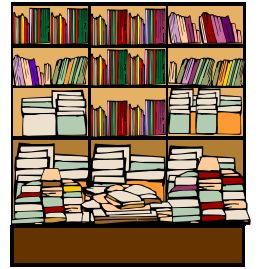
A few other things to consider helping your students:

- PowerPoint XP has more print options than earlier versions. **If the images are critical** for students, consider printing handouts with 2 slides to a page as the images will be much larger. I have heard from students that they use this method to print in the computer labs and it helps greatly with being able to learn from the handouts.
- If most of your PowerPoint is text, please use the FILE - SEND TO – WORD method to condense the pages which are necessary for student handouts. ( See Liz for more specific instructions, if needed)
- Create a Word Document of relevant websites for the course. Load the Word document and students can click on the link (or copy and paste the link) thereby reducing the chance of error when going to websites.



After you load files, go into the file yourself and see that they come up quickly (in the case of PowerPoint, WITHOUT transitions and custom animations (which now include effects)). Try accessing the files from your home computer to see how it looks and reacts off campus. Not everyone is fortunate enough to have high speed Internet access at their home! As always, if you need some additional assistance to make your page more friendly, feel free to contact Liz Larzelere.

Need to create a quick citation and you don't have a copy of the APA or MLA style guides handy? Do you have a copy of the guides handy, but you are too 1)tired 2)bored 3)confused by all the entries to look up how to do it? Then you might want to try the Citation Machine, <http://citationmachine.net/> a free service of David Warlick's Landmark Project. Just plug in the data and it will create one for you!



## Karen Bobak: The use of a WebQuest for integrating students' knowledge

Karen Bobak and Kris Petrocco recently devised and piloted an exercise for students in Extremities Technique II. In groups, students pursue answers about a case study through online journals and other library and Internet resources. Karen states that the goals of the case study are to 1) get students to become familiar with the use of online resources and 2) work as group. She says the advantage of working in a group is that "not everyone sees the same picture and it's good to have other people to bounce ideas off of."



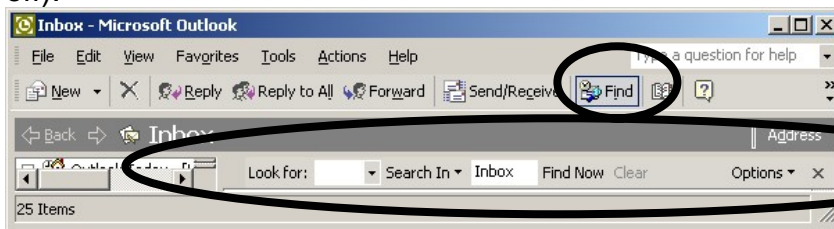
Last trimester the WebQuest was voluntary and for extra credit. This trimester it will be compulsory. Student evaluations revealed that students who completed the WebQuest felt it was an excellent opportunity to put things together from a number of courses they were taking in 4<sup>th</sup> tri. The case study is not just a "text book" case, but works on the premise that patients may present with more than 1 problem and the same condition may present in different ways. Want more information? Talk to Kris about how to

put one together and Karen about the impact on student learning.

## How can I find that e-mail message?

Do you ever find yourself wanting to look up information in an email but have a hard time finding it? Outlook XP has a Find feature which will allow you to search folders in Outlook by phrases.

Click on the Find icon on the toolbar and it will toggle the Find toolbar (toggles toolbar on and off):



Insert a phrase, select which folder you want to search and then click Find Now. It will also let you select more specific criteria by clicking on Options and choosing some of the advanced find features.