

SCHOOL LIBRARY AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES

ONLINE NEWSLETTER

Number 9

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From Larry Nesbit:

Change, Change and More Change

I hope you are learning how to adapt to change as part of our program because the electronic environment requires constant and quick adaptation if we are to be successful. A perfect example of how change is required happened today as we planned for the migration of all of our courses in the School Library program from JonesKnowledge to eCollege software.

JonesKnowledge has decided that it is no longer interested in developing and supporting courseware designed for the web so it is exiting the business. Fortunately, the State System of Higher Education, of which Mansfield University is a member, recently selected eCollege as the vendor for providing online instruction. We are now developing the process for moving to the new platform.

Our current plan is to offer one course which is currently being redesigned for the Spring semester, train all the instructors on the new software by early April, provide you with an online tutorial, and offer all our courses beginning Summer 2003 in the new format. I recognize this means more effort from everyone, but it will be worth it because we will have even more opportunities to provide excellent instructional learning.

This change was not expected, but we must adapt. While the next few months will be challenging for the instructors, you, the students, and all of the Mansfield University support staff, we will keep our focus on providing a supportive environment as we work through the migration process. By this time next year, we will wonder how we existed before we started using the more powerful software!

A “long and winding road” - the path from online student to online instructor.

By Robin K. Schreiter

The fall of 1998 found me getting ready to take a sabbatical. I had decided that I couldn't drive an hour and a half to get to class, then sit in lectures for three hours for the fifteen weeks for the next three years. I had done that once. After researching alternative distance learning programs, I found an online degree that met my academic needs and my personal criteria (no driving and 10-12 week courses). The next step involved convincing my district that online was the way to go. Luckily, my school district was at the cusp of something new and wonderful, a virtual high school. If online was good for our kids, it should be good for our teachers. January of 1999 found me with a brand new G3 Macintosh that was all mine – Hands off to my husband and teenage daughters. I loved the online

environment; it was a wonderful way to learn. I spent my days at home working on my computer, reading in my pajamas and learning wonderful new things about educational technology. Through emails and online discussions I got to know my fellow students and instructors. In one class the emails were as good as a stand up comedy. Group projects allowed me to interact with the other students and develop a closer relationship with individuals as we went through the classes together. Sometime during the summer of 1999, I received a phone call from Deb Kachel. “Mansfield University”, she said, “was interested in offering an online degree, would I come to a meeting to share the perspective of an online student?” Little did I know when I said yes to Deb, I would leave the meeting not only as an online student, but also a course designer and most probably an online instructor. I left the meeting in somewhat of a panic until I remembered the readiness survey that I had taken to begin at Lesley University:

- **Technical Readiness: What kind of hard ware would I need? Internet service? Etc.**
- **Disposition Readiness: Did I have a place to work and a computer at home? Could I block out chunks of time? Could I work consistently? Try new technologies? Was I self motivated? An independent learner? Persons and resources available to me for when I needed help?**
- **Skills Readiness: Could I email? Handle attachments? Use FTP to send documents?**

The answers to these questions helped me to say YES to Mansfield; I could

take on this new challenge. I had the skills, the disposition and the desire.

The next year and half was spent building a course outline, locating and selecting resources for the course and designing assignments that would be meaningful to the student but also demonstrate what the student was learning and internalizing. I often reflected on what worked for me as a student: activities, amount of work, types of resources and assignments. The biggest challenge for me has been designing assignments and assessments. Having been a LMS for 20 years, I helped design assignments with teachers, but had little to no experience designing the assessment piece for those assignments. I turned to the same skills I used in my online degree program; I was a motivated independent learner with resources at my fingertips. Getting the course ready was one of the hardest tasks I have ever had to accomplish.

May of 2001 found me with a new Dell Laptop – Hands off to my husband and teenagers – they could use the G3 hand-me-down. I was now an online instructor. My days were still spent at the computer answering emails, reading in my pajamas and learning new wonderful things from my students. Although the transition from student to teacher has been relatively painless, it has required great deal of learning, hard work and time. The same traits that helped me as an online student help me as an online instructor. The disposition of an online learner is much the same as the disposition of an online instructor. In fact, I still regard myself as a student. My Mansfield students teach me a great deal because they bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to our

discussions. I continue to search for new materials, new ideas and different ways to help my students learn. The biggest difference I see as an instructor is that the course is never finished. Unlike an assignment that is completed and turned in, the course can be modified and changed. Thanks to students' suggestions, I have modified assignments and developed better rubrics.

The lessons I have learned on this "long and winding road" are -- be careful when Deb Kachel invites you to a meeting and the distance between learner and teacher is not far apart.

What Does A School Library Media Specialist Do?

Selector of Resources
Multimedia Instructor
Information Literacy Guru
Locator of Grants
Eager Collaborator
Storyteller



Administrator & Accountant

Literature Lover
Online Search Expert
Tireless Teacher

Want a T-shirt That Promotes What You Do?

As a result of a discussion at the June residency, the idea of creating a T-shirt to promote what school library media specialists do, an idea was born. The design featured above is on a white short-sleeved, 100% cotton T-shirt. The image is silk-screened for a high quality graphic and is available in sizes from youth and small through 3XL. The shirt sells for \$16.95 for sizes up to XL and is \$17.95 for 2XL and 3XL. Prices include shipping and handling. You may send an email to Kathe Santillo

kls0412@aol.com and place "advocacy T-shirt" in the subject line. Mail your check to Kathe Santillo, 521 W. Penn Street, Butler, PA 16001.

We hope to see a lot of these shirts at our next PSLA conference. Let's advertise the important job we do. You can wear it to staff and department meetings just to let everyone know how lucky they are to have you on the staff!

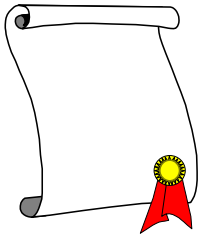


TAKE NOTE:

One of my students recently handed in an assignment that referred to an article written by Judith Sykes entitled "The Role of the Teacher-Librarian in the 21st Century". I was particularly struck with one quote from Sykes. "I charge that the role of the teacher-librarian in the 21st century needs to be focused on learning leadership -- living, teaching, modeling the wisest and best knowledge we have on educational practice, science, and marry it to information literacy and 21st century resource-based learning."

What pleased me the most with this statement is that the principles on which your Mansfield online program is based revolve around this belief. Our online students will be well prepared to carry their leadership banners high with pride.

Sykes, Judith. "The Role of the Teacher-Librarian in the 21st Century." School Libraries in Canada 2001, Vol 21 Issue 2: 5-8 Ebscohost. Academic Search Primer. Mansfield University, Mansfield, PA. 28 Sept. 2002. <http://web9.epnet.com/>



IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN!

Yes, it is just about time to register for the Spring 2003 semester. The courses being offered are:

LSC 501 Instructional Collaboration
LSC 505 Core Resources
LSC 510 Electronic Delivery Syst.
LSC 520 Cataloging & Classif.
LSC 530 Library Advocacy
LSC 540 Infor. Search,Ret. Etc.
**LSC 560 Seminar, Residency
& Practicum**

Students who are currently taking classes, or those who have taken at least one course, will be able to register online through WebAdvisor based on the number of credits they have completed.. Please follow the schedule below:

- Students who have 20+ credits may register beginning October 21st.
- Students with 9-19 credits may register beginning October 30th.
- Students with 0-8 credits may register beginning November 6th.

WebAdvisor closes on November 13th!

However, the following students must register through Dr. Dorwart, d.dorwart@worldnet.att.att or 717-569-8838.

- All students registering for LSC 560.
- All new students registering for their first class.

PLEASE NOTE:

Students may access WebAdvisor using their email address as the ID and the last four digits of their Social Security Number as their PIN.

It is important that students who plan on graduating during 2003 get registered in the classes they need to complete their program at the earliest possible date. Don't find yourself shutout of the very class you need!

IF YOU EXPERIENCE ANY PROBLEMS WITH REGISTERING FOR CLASSES ONLINE, CONTACT DR. DORWART