



Edison Online Connect

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Contact Us

Andrea Posner
Adjunct Services Coordinator
Newsletter Editor
aposner@edison.edu

From the Editor's Desk –

The staff at Edison Online welcomes our adjunct faculty to the beginning of a new semester. We hope you will enjoy this premier issue of our newsletter, *Edison Online Connect*.

In upcoming issues we will introduce our staff, offer tips from experienced Edison Online faculty, preview exciting, sophisticated software designed to enhance the online classroom experience, and feature *News You Can Use*, practical advice to clarify our procedures.

As your editor and newest member of the Edison Online staff, let me begin by introducing myself. My career spans many years in the college textbook publishing industry, beginning in sales with Prentice-Hall before accepting the position of Acquisitions Editor for Charles Merrill Publishing Co. At Merrill, I worked with faculty in colleges and universities throughout the U.S. to acquire manuscripts and revise successful college textbooks in the fields of mathematics, engineering, criminal justice, and business. I eventually left the publishing industry to join the staff of the College of Engineering at Ohio State University as head of Academic Advisement for the Computer Science Department, and then as Director of the Honors Program for the College of Engineering. I worked with major corporations to obtain scholarship funding, counseled honors students, and coordinated freshman orientation, a third quarter introduction to the engineering disciplines, and an honors research seminar for qualified third-year students. My degrees are in mathematics (A.B., Hunter College) and computer science (M.S., University of Wisconsin) respectively.

It's an honor for me to return to academia as the Adjunct Services Coordinator for Edison Online. I will be working closely with Dean Myers in the recruitment and training of our adjunct faculty.

What has impressed me most here at the eLearning Center is the spirit of our staff, the warmth and thoughtfulness reflected in each decision, and the ongoing commitment to create the premier online learning environment for both faculty and students. We are here to serve our online faculty. Please let us know how we can help at any time. I hope this newsletter will become a useful addition to your online toolbox.

With warm regards,

Andrea Posner
Adjunct Services Coordinator
Edison Online
aposner@edison.edu

News You Can Use

IMPORTANT CHANGE TO TESTING CENTER PROCEDURES

Beginning this fall, the testing *dates* for all proctored examinations must be entered into the CE6 Faculty Forum calendar by September 15. The deadline for submitting testing details remains one week before the test date.

Teaching Online Courses – Tips from Faculty

Each month we will ask an experienced online faculty member to share a tip or technique that has worked well in the online classroom. This month, we call on Professor Rona Axelrod of the Mathematics Department.

At the very beginning of the semester, Professor Axelrod posts a survey on the assignment link in CE6. She uses it as an icebreaker and it counts as an assignment. She asks some personal questions – *where were you born? how many siblings do you have? how many times have you moved?* – and some course-specific questions – *have you used my math lab before? have you set aside at least 10 hours each week to dedicate to this class? are you using a Mac or PC?*

Each student must take the survey, copy his or her answers to the discussion board, and then read the posts of their classmates. This serves the dual purpose of familiarizing Professor Axelrod with her students and giving the students the opportunity to learn about each other. Every student who completes the assignment earns a grade of 100% for the first assignment. Professor Axelrod says this starts them off on the right foot – an excellent grade for their first assignment builds confidence and diminishes anxiety.

Another benefit is that the student becomes familiar with the assignment link and the discussion board. Students first go to the assignment link, then on to the discussion board where they find a thread titled *please introduce yourself*. After posting survey responses, the student must return to the assignment link to submit the survey responses in order to earn a grade of 100%.

For students who are unfamiliar with or confused by the online learning tools, this is a good beginning to their semester. They have easily earned a perfect grade. When they complete the assignment, Professor Axelrod enters a message in the comment box on the assignment link instructing them to proceed to the next lesson.

Professor Axelrod monitors student involvement via a tracking report to assess whether her students are reading the discussion board postings. She tracks how many postings a student has read and posted, whether he or she has read emails, which links were clicked, and the amount of time spent on the system. There's a direct correlation between time spent on the system and performance.

Would a first assignment survey work for your online class?

eLearning Technology

This monthly feature will introduce you to the newest technologies at Edison Online, along with reviews of existing hardware and software. As Dean Myers cautioned in our recent webinar, don't become overwhelmed – identify one application or piece of equipment that lends itself to your online learning environment – and focus on that offering.

Erich Hochmeister, our Training and Development Specialist, spoke to me about two products we will be implementing on our CE6 servers – Wimba Classroom 6.0 and Wimba Voice 6.0 (www.wimba.com).

Wimba Classroom

Wimba Classroom 6.0 is a live virtual classroom environment that allows more robust synchronous activity than our current chat/whiteboard tool within CE6. Its presentation tools give instructors or students the flexibility to annotate whiteboard content and PowerPoint slides, make over-the-web presentations, or share desktop applications like Microsoft Word. Wimba Classroom includes an active chat area and offers the ability to download handout files, share video and have voice interaction between student and instructor or student-to-student. One of the most important features of this leading-edge technology is the ability to record and then provide playback files in MP3 and MP4 format after the session is complete. This feature will allow the students to review the session exactly as it occurred rather than reading an all-text transcript.

There are extensive training materials available on the Wimba website under the Services tab. Erich is now developing online training sessions for the Wimba products as well as many of our other applications.

Wimba Voice

Wimba Voice 6.0 is a highly targeted solution providing an instructor-to-student voice connection in the classroom and beyond (e.g., student discussion boards) via threaded voice boards.

One of the most important applications for Wimba Voice will involve our efforts to bring future foreign language courses online, allowing students to converse not only with their professors but in an open forum with other students through the discussion boards.

