Cyber-cerebration: Edge Happenings at Western Illinois University

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Less than six months ago, 25 colleagues gathered for a celebration. We were recruited for the Innovators in Teaching and Learning cadre, lured by the dangle of a wireless laptop and the desire to become edge users of technology. Today we again celebrate the modest, but steady diffusion that our team members have made. We’ve come to think with you about the strengths of our cross-disciplinary team, the formation of a community of learners, and the application of our new skills in our teaching.

Technology has had an impact on our lesson content, the thinking processes we employ with our students, and the products our students produce. The diversity of the cadre was one of its strengths. There were experienced distance teachers, newbies and converts in the group. We were united around the Blackboard course that gave structure to our development plan. Participation in the course gave us much need support in the earliest stages of our endeavor. Relevant readings were the focus of our discussion and served to refocus our commitment to the project. After a particularly globe trotting summer, we are back in harness digesting Kurzweil’s book, The Age of the Spiritual Machine (Kurzweil 1999). The futuristic scenarios spun out by this author lend further motivation to our work together.

Panel members will briefly share their story. You’ll hear about electronic portfolios and website development, concept mapping in teacher education, on-line teaching and learning, and integrating technology and content standards with student products that include hotlists, treasure hunts, webquests, and desktop publishing. We’ll document our learning and challenge participants to join the fun as part of their professional development.

References