

## Telecommunications in the university classroom

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For the past two years we both have made use of the electronic mail and conferencing facilities of the Simon Fraser University MTS computer system during the courses we have been giving in the Department of English and the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University. These courses have been offered on a variety of different topics including Canadian Poetry, Studies in the Essay as a Rhetorical Form, and an Introduction to Microcomputers in the Classroom.

Our presentation will delineate the problems, logistics, and advantages of working with a group of students using electronic communications as a means of discussing course material, submitting course assignments, conducting student/instructor interviews, and evaluating both the material covered and the quality of instruction.

We will demonstrate some of the online messaging, forum discussions, and electronic information retrieval, and telelecturing that took place during the various courses that have been conducted using electronic communications. We will also discuss some of the innovative projects that have been developed by the students as a result of having this means of instant group access available to them. This includes the setting up of electronic penpal systems between classes in different disciplines in the university, between groups of students from different cultures, and "cross-age" communications between adults and children.

We will also present some of the current projects involving telecommunications in education that we are separately developing through our respective disciplines. Finally, we will discuss the promising educational implications of this form of communications in promoting both cooperative and individual strategies for the retrieving and sharing of the information which makes up the content of an academic course.