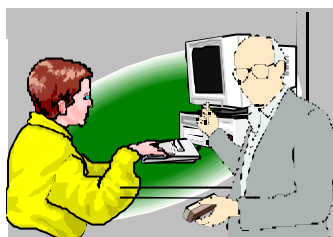


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From the Editor:

28 April 2003

*'Learning Matters at Lingnan' are short papers that aim to promote a dialogue on teaching and learning. I encourage all staff to consider this as a vehicle for sharing thoughts on educational issues as they might affect us at the University. If you feel you have something which might be appropriate for inclusion in an issue of this publication, then please forward it to the TLC. I would be delighted if staff (and not only academic staff) from outside the Teaching and Learning Centre were to be prominent or even occasional contributors.*



## Sharing good practice in teaching using technology

SARS has been so disruptive in the classroom that necessity has prompted many adjustments, some of them innovative. We would like to tell you about one such innovation, in the hopes that you will bring to our attention others that we could share with our readers.

In early April, when classes were cancelled for a week, Professor Eugene Eoyang, Chair Professor of English, left early on a scheduled trip to the United States, but not before preparing in advance a videotaped class to be shown during his absence. He arranged with the Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC) for a videotaping of a two-hour class in which half of the class involved a PowerPoint presentation, and half in straight lecture format. There were some technical problems with videotaping a PowerPoint session, most of them resulting from the different lighting needs of the camera when focused on a live object (the speaker) and a VGA screen. The problem was solved by providing separate videotape playback on a TV monitor, and displaying the PowerPoint slides on a VGA screen. Professor Eoyang provided his teaching intern, Ms. Josephine Dunham, with a compact disk of the PowerPoint presentation, which she could show while the videotape was running.

However, with the cancellation of the second week of classes, the lecture that was videotaped was postponed another week, and would occur after Professor Eoyang's return to Hong Kong. Although the videotape was no longer needed as a substitute for Professor Eoyang during his absence, he showed it nevertheless, augmenting the taped class with his live comments. The students were exposed to a double dose of the instructor, one on the screen and the other in the classroom. The benefits of this arrangement accrued to both students and instructor: the students could relate to the videotape and, at the same time, interact with the instructor in the classroom; the instructor, in reviewing the tape, could also observe his own strengths and weaknesses in making his presentation.

The videotape served another purpose. Although only one student was absent from class, the videotape was useful for students who might have fallen ill and who were forced to miss class. TLC arranged for the posting of the videotape on the Web, and notices were e-mailed to all the students indicating the URL where they could download the videotape on their desktops. Indeed, students could "re-view" the videotape as part of their preparations for the final examination at the end of the semester.

What started off as an *ad hoc* solution to a logistics problem – how to maintain continuity in a class in the actual or anticipated absence of the instructor – turned out to be a multiple valuable educational resource, which provided remote access for students who could not attend class as well as students who merely wanted to revisit the lecture in preparing for examinations. In future, we may explore the possibility of videotaping lectures routinely, so that classes would not have to be cancelled even during an outbreak of a contagious disease.

From the above example we learn that the mode of class delivery can be very flexible, dynamic, effective, and innovative via the use of educational technology. It is clear that the integration of technology into the classroom and curriculum has become more important, especially in university teaching, and resources and support for assisting teachers in this respect have become more crucial. At Lingnan, we are fortunate to have the help and resources provided by various support units such as Library, ITSC, and TLC. With the support, workshops and seminars have been organized for our teaching colleagues to help them understand how technology can make a significant difference in their teaching and students' learning. Moreover, several TDG projects like T & T and TLWeb organized and hosted by TLC have helped contribute to university teachers' development and application of educational technology. A current TLC-TDG initiative, LLE Project\* also provides financial and technical assistance for university teachers to initiate and develop technology-supported teaching and learning materials. Through the support and resources, the integration of technology into the curriculum and classroom will no more be a hassle to teachers.

No doubt, traditional classroom-based teaching provides simultaneous feedback and communication between instructors and students, but the technology-supported curriculum can bring more flexibility with new excitement and innovations to both teaching and learning in particular when circumstances do not allow face-to-face instruction to take place.

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(with contribution from Prof. Eugene Eoyang,  
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\* LLE Project is a new UGC-funded project initiated by the Teaching and Learning Centre. University teachers who need help to develop their teaching tools or materials with IT are encouraged to participate through the Collaboration for Courseware Development component of the project. For further information about this project, please visit our project website at this URL: <http://tlc.ln.edu.hk/LLE/cwd/>