The Millennial Learner
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When asked if students today are different than they were 20 years ago, many professors answer with a quick, “I don’t know,” or a thoughtful, “it depends on the student.”

Others answer with a solid, “Yes.”

The new millennium is here, and has been for nearly eight years now. With it came new technologies, new astronomical discoveries and new works of literature. Every field of study, from history to botany, has changed since 1999 rolled over into the twenty-first century. And, according to many educational psychologists, students themselves are also changing.

The millennial students have arrived. They are making comments during class and visiting your office with questions about the syllabus. They are comfortable with new technology, and according to Neil Howe and Willam Strauss (2003), authors of Millennials Go To College, they are “unlike any other youths in living memory” (pp. 14).

Of course, being a member of the high school class of 2000, hearing this makes me blush, but more than that, it makes me question: What makes my generation so different? Howe and Strauss answer that hovering parents, secure school environments and a constant focus on self-esteem have produced a unique generation of students.

Understanding the millennial learner

Millennial students are used to having teachers adapt to meet their individual needs. In elementary school, teachers were already adapting their assignments to meet students’ different learning levels. If children had trouble reading, they were sent to remedial reading classes where they could follow the lessons without trouble. At that young age, students were receiving placement tests that would continue through high school, where they would be presented with a variety of classes in any given subject, to help serve the various skill levels of students.

Professors here at the University of Utah have already begun to recognize traits of the millennial generation in their own classes. The biggest thing Daniel Emery, assistant professor of communication and writing, has noticed in his 13 years of teaching is that students have become more “tech savvy,” with their IT abilities reaching far beyond that of previous generations.

But a close second, he said, is that his students are more in need of personal attention.

After recognizing this need in his students, he developed
several effective teaching strategies that cater to these students. “I try to make sure to individualize my responses to student writing,” he explained.

Emery’s classroom is also one of “increased interactivity,” where students share ideas, work together in groups and take turns (just like they were always taught) presenting their own views about class readings and assignments. These methods work because students feel as if their presence in class is important, Emery said.

Another teaching strategy that Emery has found to be effective is that of applying the lessons to students’ lives. Sarah Creem-Regehr, associate professor of psychology, has also found that students retain information better when she brings in examples that relate to them directly. “When I am teaching about memory,” said Creem-Regehr, “I use examples of everyday memory so that it is familiar to students.”

In her teaching, Creem-Regehr focuses on each student’s specific questions and relates the information to them in as many ways as possible.

Howe and Strauss list several other suggestions for helping millennial students. They suggest congratulating students frequently for their progress, providing students with a classroom of structure and conducting regular instructor interviews. “The key,” write Howe and Strauss, “is feedback and structure,” (p. 73).

Organization and structure have long had a place in the lives of millennials. Many current university students have been on a schedule since before they joined the soccer team at the age of four. Their summers were a constant rotation between team practice, swimming lessons and piano recitals. (I remember one summer where my activities included not only coach pitch softball, but a children’s chorus, a swimming schedule, a weekly movie and even planned out television time.) Now, as they continue their lives, many students find a lack of clear instruction or grading policies very difficult.

“Its a two-edged sword,” explained Creem-Regehr, as she explained that the necessity for constant structure can both benefit and hinder student learning. “A lot of teachers are using PowerPoint presentations when they teach, and it eliminates creativity and spontaneity when teachers are constrained to the slides,” she said.

But this may not bother many millennial students, many of whom yearn to be constrained to the assignment sheet and are afraid that their own creative deviations would lead to lower grades and less academic success.

In a recent creative writing course, I witnessed several classmates struggle with the absence of a clear, detailed rubric against which each assignment would be graded. The lack of direction was paralyzing, and many students were desirous of more detailed assignment sheets.

“Fifty years ago,” Creem-Regehr continued, “it wasn’t expected that everyone would go to college. Now, many students feel entitled to be here.” This feeling of entitlement also feeds the need for structure and personal attention.
But are things really so much different now?

Many argue that students now are the same as they always were, and that good teaching is always good teaching, no matter when it happens.

Associate Professor Monisha Pasupathi, from the U’s Department of Psychology, argues that teachers are not faced with a “fundamentally new organism every 20 years,” but that “human fundamentals restrain how different generations can be.” And it is difficult to argue otherwise.

Even as educational psychologists are discovering new methods to reach the rising generation, I have to ask whether or not these strategies would have also benefited my parents, or even grand-parents.

The use of modern technologies; the practice of giving each student personal attention, feedback, and encouragement; and the formation of clear classroom procedures that are consistently followed are, were, and will most likely continue to be good teaching practices. But as we examine the general characteristics of the millennial student, we find these teaching practices to be especially beneficial to the professor of millennial students.

“[Millennial students] maintain close ties to their parents, are highly dependent and [are] less likely than previous generations of students to venture out on their own. They demand a secure, regulated environment, and generally act respectfully toward social conventions and mores.”

-Tom Bell, vice president of the Blackboard company

“[Teachers are not faced with a] fundamentally new organism every 20 years, instead, human fundamentals restrain how different generations can be.”

- Associate Professor Monisha Pasupathi, from the U’s Department of Psychology

“Young people now days…they don’t even think the same way I do because of the way technology has changed.”

-Jason Smith, manager of the U’s Department of Marketing and Communication and editor of Continuum magazine

“Skills that you learn from being involved like running a meeting, delegating duties and managing a budget are genuine skills that can be used in the career fields, but students don’t know it so they don’t include it on their resume.”

- Associate Dean of Students Lori McDonald on the need for students to recognize the “transferable skills” they have learned during classes

“Technology can change and it always will. If you try to be a good teacher, you can be as effective as always no matter what the technology is. It’s always going to be tempting [to cheat], but if we do our jobs as teachers, we’re going to create good enough assignments that students want to do. Technology is maybe giving us more challenges, but I think we can overcome them.”

-Assistant Professor Glen Feighery, from the U’s Department of Communication

“I am not of the belief that a lot of students would spend that amount of time on a class if they did not have [WebCT] to interact with. Indirectly they are spending 908 hours with me because I was on there everyday; I was looking, I was reading. I did not comment on everything but … that is an extra 908 hours that I spent with my students.”

-Assistant Professor Ron Yaros, from the U’s Department of Communication
“The single biggest problem facing education today is that ... language (that of the pre-digital age), are struggling to teach a population that speaks an entirely new language” (p. 2), states Marc Prensky (2001), author of “Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants.” He states that college and university instructors as a whole are not only less technologically savvy than their “millennial students,” but they are also using outmoded forms of pedagogy and communication and thus fail to teach students effectively. In an effort to accommodate the needs and preferences of millennial students, universities are increasingly turning to a digital environment—the online classroom—to educate. Who are millennial students? What are the pros and cons of online classrooms? And how can we successfully use the digital environment to educate? The purpose of this article is to answer these questions.

Defining the “Millennial Student”

The “millennial student” refers generally to 18-to-22-year-old college students growing up in the digital age (Oblinger and Oblinger, 2005). Howe and Strauss (2000) categorize these students as those who gravitate toward group activity; identify with parents’ values and feel close to their parents; believe it’s cool to be smart; are fascinated by new technologies; are racially and ethnically diverse; are focused on grades and performance; and are busy with extracurricular activities. Tom Bell (2006), vice president of the Blackboard company, reiterates these characteristics. He states that millennial students “maintain close ties to their parents, are highly dependent and [are] less likely than previous generations of students to venture out on their own. They demand a secure, regulated environment, and generally act respectfully toward social conventions and mores.” Millennial students are trained to be achievers, are focused on performance and grades, and tend to be voracious consumers who rely on credit to make online purchases. The overriding stereotypical characteristic of millennial students is their ability to use technology. As Phalen (2002) states, “today’s children embrace machines; communicate in isolation; and spend hours in chat rooms, conversing with masked personas.”

Some, like Marc Prensky (2001) and Bruce Berry of Baylor college (in Phalen, 2002), believe that millennial students’ emphasis on technology has caused them to “think and process information fundamentally differently from their predecessors” (p. 1). Students growing up in the digital age have little patience for lectures, step-by-step logic, and “tell-test” instruction. They are used to the “twitch speed” of video games and MTV. They’re used to instantly receiving hypertext, music, beamed messages,
and instant messaging. And they want learning to not only be instantaneous—it should also be entertaining (in Prensky, 2001, p. 1). Others, like Tom Brown, associate dean of students at Virginia Tech, and Mary Ann Pugh, director of the Center for Counseling and Career Planning at Randolph-Macon College, believe that technology’s role in the structuring of personalities and learning skills is limited. As Brown states: “I think [students] spend more time in their room on the computer. But when it’s time to come out and socialize,” students are more than ready to do that (in Phalen, 2002)

While people contest the basic characteristics of the millennial student, most educators agree that the digital revolution and resulting emphasis on technology among millennial students offers both challenges and opportunities for students and instructors. These challenges and opportunities become pronounced when the environment is entirely digital—in the online classroom.

I have been affected profoundly by the online classroom environment as both a student and instructor. After completing the second year of the Ph.D. program in Communication at the University of Utah, I relocated to California for my husband’s job. At the time, I was only four classes shy of completing my classes and wanted badly to finish my program. Thanks to the kindness and generosity of three instructors who allowed me to take their classes online, I successfully completed my comprehensive exams about eighteen months later. Today, I am working on my dissertation—long distance, of course. My employment as a faculty associate at Arizona State University has also been entirely online. I currently teach two courses in mass communication at Arizona State from my home in San Clemente, California. Because of the digital revolution, I can put my four-month-old baby down for a nap in California, conduct a discussion with students in Arizona, and communicate with my professors in Utah—all from the same location and at the same time. For me, the benefits of the digital revolution far outweigh any drawbacks. But for other students and instructors, the online environment can be detrimental to their teaching and learning.

Pros and Cons of Online Classes

As I prepared to write this article, I invited my students to write about both the challenges and opportunities they are facing as millennial students enrolled in an online course. My students were very willing to tell me what they think about their previous and current online courses. Some students feel the workload of an online course is too heavy; others feel it is easier than a traditional face-to-face class. Some students have found the purely online format to be prohibitive to communicating effectively; others feel that they communicate better online. Some students are pleased that everyone in the class is “forced” to participate in the discussion forum; others feel it shouldn’t be required. I did, however, find striking consensus in some areas. According to my students, the pros of taking online classes are (1) greater flexibility; (2) less anxiety when discussing issues; and (3) control of surroundings. My students also consented that the cons of taking online classes are (1) the heavy responsibility placed on the student; (2) difficulty establishing relationships with professors and classmates; (3) frustration that comes with computer malfunction or lack of technical knowledge; and (4) the need for hands-on learning in some subjects.
Pro #1: Flexibility.

Flexibility was first and foremost on my students’ list of online classroom “pros.” Millennial students, as Prensky (2001), Phalen (2002), and Bell (2006) point out, tend to be very busy and achievement-oriented. Online classrooms allow them the freedom and flexibility they need to cram another class into their already-tight schedules or prepare for an important event in another area of life.

One student wrote, “This semester my first baby is due the week of finals. It would be very hard for me to waddle around campus in my last trimester while taking on a full load of classes. Not to mention when it comes time to take the final, if I’ve gone into labor then it would be very stressful and complicated making it back to campus to take five finals with a newborn.” This flexibility also allows students to work in ways and at times that best suit their learning styles and living habits. As another student said, “I feel like a ‘grown up’ . . . I don’t have a teacher breathing over my shoulder telling me what to do. I can do the outline at four in the morning or eleven at night, whichever fits my schedule.” Clearly, the flexibility of an online class is a major plus for students and instructors alike.

Pro #2: Less Anxiety.

Many of my students felt less anxiety participating in class discussion in an online format. Because students in class don’t know each other, they tend to feel less social pressure and therefore less anxiety in expressing their opinions. One student wrote, “I feel like I can express whatever I want because I don’t have the whole class to look at me and judge. It’s like I’m an anonymous student that can say what she wants without having to worry about what others will think. I think that is a problem that a lot of students, including myself, face. We are nervous to ask because of the response we will get from the other students.” This anonymity not only allows students to express their opinions, but according to some students it may also mask personality clashes that may crop up in traditional classroom settings. One student said,

“Overall, online classes can be much less intimidating; it is pretty rare that you are not going to like your teacher
or classmates.” The relative anonymity of an online classroom can result in less social pressure and fewer personality clashes, thus alleviating anxiety that some students feel in a traditional classroom setting.

**Pro #3: Control of Surroundings.**

This was a commonly cited “pro” that I hadn’t thought of before asking for my students’ perspectives. Some students find it difficult to learn in a traditional classroom setting. Perhaps it’s the uncomfortable seats or the lack of air conditioning; maybe it’s the need for a quiet surrounding or some background noise. But whatever the reason, students love the online classroom because they can create and control their own physical environment.

Here’s one of the most colorful descriptions I received: “The online media allowed for me to sit at home and complete my assignments from our exceedingly comfy couch while watching the original version of Miracle on 34th Street, and baking and decorating seasonal cookies. That same class also allowed me to participate while I sipped hot cocoa next to a log fire in Tahoe after taking a few runs down the slopes. If it wasn’t obvious, the ability to be anywhere and yet still be in class is one of the major perks to the online experience.” This student likes her creature comforts—and she can have them in the online classroom. Another student found the ability to go somewhere quiet a plus: “In a classroom of sometimes 200 students, there are a lot of distractions. This leads to a lack of concentration when people are walking in and out of class, text messaging and talking. If you are at home, in the library or at work, you can control your surroundings much easier.” Yet another student found the control of his physical surroundings important because he could control the speed in which he digested information: “You can see all of the information in front of you on the computer screen and take more time to see everything. This works well if you are more of a visual learner than listening to someone talk. In class, you have to listen to your professor and take notes at the same time. They rarely repeat themselves so trying to catch up while listening is difficult. With online classes, the information is all in front of you so you can go back and reread something as many times as you want.” If you’re looking for comfort, quiet, or time, online classes are ideal.

**Con #1: Responsibility.**

An online course requires students to shoulder more responsibility than a traditional class. Students are responsible for accessing the interactive website, turning in assignments on time, and asking questions about anything they don’t understand. For many millennial students, jumping from high school (where, as one student said, they are “spoon-fed information”) to an online course in college is a drastic—and unwelcome—change. One student said, “Not only do you need to make sure you do your assignments and turn them in, but you need to make sure you’re staying on top of when the assignments are actually due and any additional information your professor may have posted online. I cannot tell you how many times a friend has come into my room and said, ‘I completely missed an assignment...”
for my online class! After something like this happens, it is usually pretty hard to make a comeback.” Online classroom horror stories are common. One student said, “The first time I ever took an online class I had five other courses and a full time job. I got so carried away with everything else on my platter I completely forgot about the online class. I kept putting it off and putting it off until I was so far behind there was no catching up. I ended up having to get someone to drive me to ASU West . . . to track down my teacher and get his signature to withdraw from the class.”

While the increased responsibility placed on students can be a drawback, students can also benefit from it if the assignments are structured well. One student said, “I am currently in an online course call Media and Society. This online course . . . makes me stay on top of the reading by outlining each chapter, getting a better sense of the material. . . . So far this online class has taught me a lot and I have engaged in critical thinking discussion questions.” If students rise to the occasion and accept the additional responsibility of an online course, they can ultimately benefit from it.

Con #2: Underdeveloped relationships.

While students found it easier to share their opinions and communicate openly in an online forum, they also tended to find the lack of “face time” detrimental to developing relationships with instructors and students. One student said, “I feel like I am missing out on the ‘personal’ touch that teachers give, like personal experiences, or the emotions that go into the teaching career.

Plus, isn’t a big part of going to college meeting new people and interacting with students? How can you do that if you’re cooped up at a computer?” Another student reiterated this concern: “The drawback of online classes is that you do not know your classmates. When you are in class and need a helping hand, it is easy to turn to your neighbor and swap phone numbers or email addresses for extra help. With online classes, other students are not as likely to help because they are talking to a complete stranger and do not know how well they can rely on them. I know that when I get an email from someone asking for help I am apprehensive because I do not know if I can trust them, and I don’t know how responsible they will be with my information, both personal and academic.” Interestingly, this lack of relationship with the teacher leads some students to doubt the ability of the instructor to accurately assess performance and grade fairly:

“The professor can not see how dedicated you are to the class because they can not see how you pay attention, how many classes you show up to, your participation in the class or very much of your personality. I have always been told that when I write papers I sound like a robot and no personality comes through. I am very opposite in real life. I am outgoing and easy going and I know my writing comes off as uptight and cold.” The absence of face-to-face conversation in online courses makes personal relationships between students and instructors difficult to develop, potentially resulting in unsatisfactory experiences in the online classroom environment.
Con #3: Technology Barrier.

Many students express frustration—and sometimes panic—with regard to their inability to access or understand the blackboard environment. During the first two weeks of fall semester, I received no less than twenty emails asking for extra time to complete assignments because (1) the ASU courses site was down; (2) they didn’t know they should push “send” to place their assignment in the “digital drop box”; (3) they didn’t understand the syllabus (or didn’t read it thoroughly); or some other technology-related question. One student expressed his frustration this way: “I am not very ‘computer advanced,’ which makes it hard for me to sometimes upload outlines, or perform another type of technological process. And then, when I finally do get them uploaded or have added a new thread, I have a feeling that I did it wrong, and I’ll miss points because I cannot figure out how to upload a simple file, and reply to a bulletin. Technology always has its difficulties and complications, and I feel like I have the worst of luck with computers!” Although millennial students may be categorically computer literate, there are surprisingly many students who don’t have the experience or ability to negotiate their way around an online classroom. For these students, the online classroom experience is time-consuming and frustrating. In addition, computer or Internet-related system malfunction can prevent students from handing in assignments or accessing the site when they need to. As one student stated, “There’s not much time for Internet failure.”

Con #4: Lack of hands-on time.

The online classroom can be a fantastic opportunity to study subjects like mass media. Because so much of mass media depends on digital technology, and because the class depends largely on analytical skills rather than physical skills, the online classroom is a natural fit. The online classroom may not be a good fit, however, for subjects that are taught more easily with a hands-on approach. One student stated, “I have found that there are some subjects which I simply half [sic] to physically be in to be able to learn such as science. I took a science class which as most did, had a lab connected with it. I decided instead of trekking all the way back to school to go to the lab I would take it online. Halfway through the semester after completing one of the six or seven at-home labs, I realized that I would be redoing that course differently the next semester. That time I flipped the scenario and passed with flying colors.” Hands-on time may also be more important for some types of students. The online class is geared towards visual learners who need to see information written before they can commit it to memory. Tactile learners, on the other hand, tend to do better in a traditional classroom that allows them to work with the material they are studying. Audio learners may also do better in a traditional classroom, because they can listen to the instructor explain information. In sum, hands-on time is critical for some subjects and students; in these cases, a hybrid (partially online, partially face-to-face) or traditional classroom would be preferable.
Final Recommendations

As both a student and instructor of online courses, I would like to conclude with a few recommendations for instructors that I have found to be useful in the online classroom. These recommendations have been reiterated by many of my students, as well.

First, prompt communication via email is essential in keeping students engaged with the class and avoiding potential communication barriers. I first learned the benefit of this from my committee chair. I knew that if I emailed him a question, he would respond within 24 hours, even when he was on vacation. Although I didn’t expect this from him and sometimes felt guilty for taking time from his busy schedule, I appreciated it immensely. This is one of the major reasons that I was able to stay engaged with my Ph.D. program from a distance. I have made this a priority with my students, as well, and they appreciate it. As one student said, “My experiences in this course have been positive so far. It’s been easy getting in touch with the professor. The responses have come quickly and detailed which help a lot.” Knowing that your instructor cares enough to respond goes a long way to make up for the lack of face-to-face interaction between students and instructors.

Second, it is vital as an instructor to facilitate a respectful online environment. So far, I have not had any trouble with this. My students are generally respectful to one another. While they may disagree with each other’s perspectives, they have avoided name-calling, derogation, or other unacceptable online behavior. Some instructors who have had issues with lack of respect have required students to post their pictures online next to their name or have given “citizenship points.” They found that these incentives (lack of anonymity, potential difference in grade) lead disrespectful students to change their
behaviors. As a safeguard, I require this, as well.

Third, it is important to respond to discussion board posts. The discussion board in the online classroom functions in my classes as a replacement for in-class discussion. According to my students, instructors often do not respond much to these discussions. Instructors may be overwhelmed by the increased workload that sometimes comes with an online class; or they may want the discussion board to be a place of free expression without comments from the teacher. I have found, however, that if instructors do not respond adequately to discussion board posts, students feel that the instructor doesn’t care about their opinions. This can lead to student disengagement from the class. One student said, “What I like most about this class in particular is that you respond to almost everyone’s threads. I have never had a teacher do that before. It makes it very apparent that you are actually reading what everyone is writing.” Students sometimes have a difficult time expressing their opinions and emotions in class settings. When instructors respond positively to these perspectives, students feel safer in the classroom and tend to be more engaged with the material.

Fourth, instructors should grade throughout the semester and post those grades for students. Invariably there are students who don’t read the syllabus and do the wrong assignments or don’t get them in on time. Posting grades after a few weeks of class acts as a warning for students who are unwittingly starting to fall behind; it also provides feedback for students who aren’t sure what the instructor expects. After posting grades for assignments due the first two weeks of this semester, I had many students email me in a panic. They didn’t understand the syllabus correctly; they thought the discussion board post was the only assignment; they didn’t know where to find the chapter assignments; etc. Most of these problems were due to their inexperience with an online course or lack of computer proficiency, so I gave them the opportunity to make up their assignments for full credit. The students were happy with the grace period, and I was happy that students turned in their assignments and became more engaged in the class. Posting grades is also important because it is more likely in an online environment that teachers somehow “lose” a student assignment. Whether it is the mistake of the student, the instructor, or the digital highway, losing student papers occurs more commonly in a digital environment. If grading is done throughout the semester, students can quickly resend an assignment or speak with the instructor if something is missed.

In conclusion, the challenges and opportunities for the millennial student learning in a digital environment are many. As one student said, “Online courses give me mixed feelings. I don’t know if I should love them or hate them. . . . One could argue that online courses are the best thing that ever happened to the academic world or that is the worst possible thing that could have happened to it.” Depending on the instructor’s preparation, the student’s personality, the student’s learning style, and the subject being taught, online classes can be a blessing or a bane. For me and many of my students, it’s a fantastic way to teach and learn.

References


Cheating isn’t what it used to be. The days of transcribing a test review onto your ankle and casually pulling up your pant leg to reveal the answers during the test may not be gone, but the tactics have certainly evolved. Today’s students have unprecedented access to technologies that make cheating easier than ever. Fortunately, however, cheating detection technology is catching up.

Profile of a Cheater: Who would do such a thing?

According to research conducted in 2005 by the Center for Academic Integrity (CAI) at Duke University, nearly 70 percent of students at most campuses admit to cheating.

University of Utah Writing Program instructor Kimberly Deneris said she estimates that students plagiarize in at least half of her classes, either by copying published works and claiming it as their own, or by using fellow students’ papers.

Communications graduate teaching fellow Samantha Senda-Cook said she believes that capitalism, more than technology, impacts student attitudes about cheating. She described some students’ concepts of education as, “If I don’t see this class as worthwhile, then I can plagiarize my paper and not be any worse for it.”

She went on to explain that the way people associate money with work may influence their justifications for cheating: “Students will say, ‘Well, I paid for this paper, it’s just like I did the work. I’m still sacrificing something: it’s just not my time and knowledge.’”

Associate professor of history Emily Michelson said that some students who plagiarize are simply overcome by panic. In her experience, students generally know when they are plagiarizing, but they do it at the last minute when they don’t have time to fully evaluate their decisions.

Technologically Advanced Cheating Methods

According to Susan Olson, associate vice president for academic affairs, plagiarism seems to be the most prevalent form of cheating at the U. With Internet Web sites that sell papers covering thousands of topics, students are tempted to take the easy way out. More common still is the copy and paste method, in which students take pieces of multiple documents and combine them to form one cohesive paper.

Students are also taking advantage of handheld devices like Blackberries and cell phones. With the prevalence of camera phones, students can subtly take pictures of exams, which they can then pass on to friends. Students are also adept at text messaging, and in large auditorium classes it can be a quick way to get answers to exams passed back and forth.

Olson explained, “Test-based disciplines struggle more with cheating on tests, which would include more of the text messaging and those types of cheating.” Such disciplines would include engineering and the sciences. Olson said she has spoken with instructors within those disciplines who have made it a classroom policy to completely ban handheld devices in order to avoid
potential problems with cheating.

Curbing Cheating: Resources for Instructors

The research conducted by CAI does offer hope. The results of the research show that implementation of Honor Codes at schools has lowered the incidence of cheating. This would seem to indicate that clear communication is critical—if students understand what behaviors constitute cheating and the consequences of those behaviors, they are less likely to cheat.

In her course syllabus, Michelson includes a section on plagiarism as defined in the Student Code. She said she modifies the section depending on the type of class that she is teaching, so students understand her expectations of them. She said she also discusses citation rules explicitly in class, so her students cannot plead ignorance.

Web sites like Turnitin.com also work to prevent cheating by running submitted papers against a database of millions of documents. According to the site, the incidence of plagiarism drops to 30 percent when instructors require their students to submit their papers through Turnitin.com. Simply knowing that their papers will be checked for plagiarism seems to be enough of a deterrent for most students.

Olson has been using Turnitin.com for two years and hasn’t experienced any problems in her classes with plagiarism. She said one feature of the site that she likes is the ability to allow students to see the reports that show where their paper matched something in the database. “It helps students buy in to the idea when they can see the report too,” she said. “If I get one that flashes red to indicate that it was a problem, then the student knows right away too, and we can sit down and talk about it.” Olson explained that even if a student has correctly quoted and cited something it will still show up as a match, but the reports are helpful in starting a dialogue about the appropriate use of quotations in good writing.

Senda-Cook said she began using Turnitin.com after working as a teaching assistant at Colorado State University and finding nearly one-fourth of the class had plagiarized from Internet sources. Upon arriving at the U, she discovered that Turnitin.com was available for instructors and decided based on her experience at Colorado State to use it.

Has she found it helpful in detecting plagiarism? She explained that she thinks it is more a case of students not knowing how to correctly cite sources. She said, “I have not seen anybody take an entire paper or an entire paragraph and just not attribute it to anything at all, which are clear cases of plagiarism. What I’ve noticed more is people saying ‘according to so-and-so’ and just having the complete sentence without quotation marks, so it appears that they are paraphrasing when they’re not. Generally when I come across that situation, I try to say, listen, this is plagiarism. If you don’t understand how to cite things, come and see me. I make them aware of it, give them some kind of penalty and then next time, that would be it.”

Senda-Cook also frequently relies on Google. If she sees a “gem sentence” in a paper filled with sentences that are incorrectly punctuated and filled with grammatical errors, she simply Googles the sentence in question and can generally find the original source. She explained that students seem to forget that if they can use Google to find sources to plagiarize from, she will be able to use Google to find the sources as well.

The University of Utah recently changed from using Turnitin.com to using the free service, SafeAssign. SafeAssign is similar to Turnitin.com. The Technology Assisted Curriculum Center (TACC) through the Marriott Library offers a tutorial for instructors to help with getting started and using the features of SafeAssign. TACC also has staff members that can assist faculty with any questions or concerns about the service.

Although she is not currently using either SafeAssign or Turnitin.com in her classes, Deneris said she would likely begin using the service in lower division writing courses now that she knows how it works. She expressed concern, however, that it forced instructors to take the
position that everybody is under suspicion until proven innocent.

Glen Feighery, assistant professor in the department of communication, has not used any plagiarism detection Web sites either and instead suggested creating assignments that reflect students’ individuality. He said he believes that tailoring papers to a student’s unique life experiences and opinions greatly minimizes the temptation to plagiarize.

Michelson echoed Feighery’s sentiments, explaining that she tries to give unusual assignments using lesser-known texts. She described an assignment idea that she had in which she would ask students to compare two different texts, but when she did a search online she discovered that her topic was widely discussed on the Web. To avoid giving her students the opportunity to plagiarize, she simply changed the assignment to a comparison of less popular texts that she had discussed in class.

Other ideas for curbing cheating include having multiple versions of the same exam so that students are not able to share their answers. Instructors can also ask students to turn in multiple drafts of papers before the final is due so they will avoid waiting until the last minute, which could help students avoid feeling pressure to plagiarize.

Regardless of the methods that instructors use to detect and prevent cheating, all of the instructors interviewed for this article agreed that any issues of cheating or plagiarism must be addressed immediately. Deneris said that she typically gives the student a failing grade on the assignment, as well as a stern lecture on why academic integrity is important. She said that in most cases students would confess once issues of cheating or plagiarism are addressed.

Some instances of cheating, however, may require more serious consequences. Michelson explained that in one of her classes, a student copied a classmate’s paper in a last minute rush to complete the assignment. Since it was obvious that he knew his actions constituted plagiarism, she gave him a failing grade for the entire course and gave his classmate a failing grade on the assignment.

Although technology may be changing the way students view intellectual property, it doesn’t necessarily make cheating an inevitable part of academics. As Feighery explained, “Technology can change and it always will. If you try to be a good teacher, you can be as effective as always no matter what the technology is. It’s always going to be tempting [to cheat], but if we do our jobs as teachers, we’re going to create good enough assignments that students want to do. Technology is maybe giving us more challenges, but I think we can overcome them.”
Thanks to a surge in online computing and technology dedicated to advancing learning, never before have teaching methods been so apt to help students retain what they hear from instructors. “Faculty can concentrate on developing teaching methods that foster understanding of material (application, reflection, testing, etc.) as opposed to using classroom time for simply transferring “knowledge” from the teacher’s notes to the student’s notes,” according to the University of Dayton’s Web site, Learning and Teaching in an e-Classroom.

Technology can introduce students to real-world situations, facilitate deeper understanding of the material and enhance instructors’ teaching methods. It can help students and educators better prepare before class as well as allow them to share comments and reflect on what took place during class. So how do instructors incorporate technology into their curriculum?

The World Wide Web provides instructors with a cost-effective (and environmentally-friendly) way to create and send information to students. From PowerPoint to e-mail and instant messaging, the Web is becoming the new way instructors communicate with students. In a study published by the Human Sciences Press, Inc., researchers found, “In 2000, 59 percent of all college courses were using electronic mail, up from 44 percent in 1998 and 20 percent in 1995. In addition, the percentage of college courses that rely on Web-based resources have increased almost fourfold, from 11 percent in 1995 to 43 percent in 2000,” according to a study conducted by Kenneth C. Green, published in Campus Computing in 2001.

One of the most common components of technology for educators and professionals is Microsoft’s PowerPoint. From school presentations to business presentations, PowerPoint offers a simple way to effectively communicate information to all sorts of audiences. Generally, everyone can operate PowerPoint for everything from creating an elaborate presentation with graphics and sound to creating a simple white background with black text.

What type of technological background do students come to college with? Vicki Olsen, computer technology teacher at Riverton High School, said, “Technology affects my students because that is what they have to
learn. The [Utah] State Board of Education decided a few years ago that all students needed some specific computer training and created computer technology as a graduation requirement. It used to be that students only needed some type of computer credit. Now they have to take this particular class to graduate.”

But this doesn’t have to mean students are more technologically savvy than their instructors once they start college.

**The benefits of online classrooms**

“Start by creating a WebCT site for your class,” said Ron Yaros, assistant professor of communication at the U. “WebCT allows for communication between instructor and student, as well as encourages communication between students in the form of e-mail, postings and blogs. With WebCT, instructors can post their PowerPoint presentations for students to have before they come to class, giving them another way to prepare for in-class discussions on the material that is being presented.”

Yaros and Grow aren’t the only WebCT fans at the U. Marci Butterfield, assistant professor in Accounting and Information Systems, said, “The benefits of WebCT are that I can communicate information that should be of benefit to my students such as homework assignments, review notes, PowerPoint presentations, syllabus information, etc. I can also give them updates to any course information in one quick email that should reach all of my students who are actively engaged in the class.”

Rebekah Grow, academic technology trainer and WebCT administrator at the U, said, “So many things are accessible by the Web these days…and education online is popping up everywhere. There are a lot of commercial and open-source learning management systems out there today. I think the benefit of having 24-7 access to your course is a great thing. If you lose your syllabus or you misplace your lecture notes, you can log in to the course and retrieve that information at any time. There is no wait if you need to email the instructor to send you the information. Having resources organized for you online for your specific course is also a huge benefit.”

In Yaros’ 2007 New Media and The Individual, a special topics course, he took students’ postings and blogs from WebCT and incorporated them into each class session by addressing the topics that he had not previously discussed. For Yaros, this proved to be an effective learning experience for his students not only because they were being introduced to a new type of learning via the Web, but because they ended up communicating about topics far more than they would in a normal classroom environment: Yaros counted 908 hours and 52 minutes total time spent by his students on WebCT or the equivalent of 37.8 days outside of the classroom. He recorded 2,712 visits made to WebCT and 117,903 total messages read.

“I am not of the belief that a lot of students would spend that amount of time on a class if they did not have this tool to interact with. Indirectly they are spending 908 hours with me because I was on there everyday; I was looking, I was reading. I did not comment on everything but ... that is an extra 908 hours that I spent with my students,” Yaros said.
instructors might see from students who are usually hesitant to speak up in class. Students who may be shy about asking questions during class or who may not have understood an assignment can participate online...and even remain anonymous to other students. “There are always some students who wish to be candid with comments and reactions but may be reluctant to share them knowing that their identity will be revealed. This is often the case when shy students come up after lecture and either ask a fantastic question or make a point that I wish they had shared in class. In this context, my experience with the new anonymous feature on WebCT was positive and encouraging. The popularity of the anonymous discussions was amazing to me and somewhat more interesting since the students’ postings offered other perspectives and dimensions of the current topic...of course, it is important for the professor to remind students that anonymous blogs and discussions are not to be used for personal attacks or inappropriate postings. I didn’t have any problems with that,” Yaros said.

WebCT also offers instructors the option to show students (privately) their grades throughout the semester, making students more accountable for their own education. Instructors are also able to upload most classroom material to WebCT, making it difficult for students to miss assignments or lecture notes, regardless of whether or not they were present during class.

Make yourself (instantly) accessible to students

What students are looking for is to know that they have been heard by the teacher. How many times have you sent an e-mail and wondered if the receiver has truly received it? That can be a frustrating feeling for a student. A reply that you have received the attached paper, or a quick reply to the student’s in-depth question, even, “I have received your e-mail and will respond to your question as soon as I am able,” are all great ways to provide immediate feedback.

Although WebCT and regular e-mail serve as excellent communication tools for you and your students, they aren’t as instantly gratifying as Windows Live Messenger (IM) by MSN; one form of instant messaging that has become common place in the business world as well as in academics.

One business in Salt Lake, 406 Partners, has an in-house IM operation. “We use it for communicating about everything. For example if I have a question for the IT guy down stairs, I just ask him real quick. Or if [an associate] needs a Broker Price Opinion unlocked, I can unlock it for him. It’s really great during quality control training when I can ask [my associate] questions about the order without screaming across the room. It’s much faster than e-mail; I love that quick response time. I also love that I don’t have to memorize phone numbers either, because it’s all in the setup by name instead of numbers,” said Katie Seegmiller, a BPO associate.

Instructors could open an IM account and publish the address on their syllabi, giving students the possibility of instant communication. Even if instructors aren’t available all the time via IM, they could include “IM hours,” much like office hours, during which students can get a hold of them.
Can your students use your technology?

“I love using it when the professor utilizes [WebCT]. WebCT is also a great way to get access to the syllabus and other course materials before the semester starts, so you have some idea what to expect. Also, it is nice to have a central area where you can access all of your classes for the semester, rather than bouncing all over to a different Web site for each course,” said Allison Sedgwick, an accounting student at the U.

When asked if her professors at the U use WebCT’s grade tracking section and if she liked it, Sedgwick said, “Most of my professors have. I love it when they do because I can keep tabs on my progress in the course. Additionally, I can make sure there is consistency between what I was told I received on an assignment or test and what was actually recorded. This is actually my favorite part about utilizing WebCT. However, when the professor does not keep the grades up-to-date or fails to post all grades it is very frustrating.”

Both Rebekah Grow and Joseph Buchanan, (U online administrator and campus WebCT support), recommend that professors continue to receive training to better utilize WebCT.

“Technology in general will give more options for sharing of information, including more control of access to that information. Course delivery systems and WebCT specifically, will continue to be used in the education process, though the dependency of these systems on Web technology will require a significant change before too long mainly because of security issues,” Buchanan said.

Grow offers this for support: “We are hearing more from students that they would like training sessions of their own and [so we] started a pilot during the summer of 2007. It is not only for the new user to WebCT, but those who may have some questions still or want a refresher on how to use certain tools. These demos provide a question and answer period at the end for students. We also demo the tools most instructors use in their courses. Students [and professors] also have a support page on the TACC website, [www.tacc.utah.edu] where they can view documentation and get information specific to them. We hope that faculty members who have used it in the past for just their syllabus and email will come in for more training as the program keeps morphing with updates and new tools.”

Set up your WebCT and IM accounts

WebCT:

Log on to your my.utah.edu portal via the utah.edu homepage and click on WebCT and then on “Instructor Forum.” This link provides help with designing your site, accessing the Marriott Library course reserves, and even includes a handout for your students who are new to WebCT. Activate your course by clicking on the “Course Activation” tool located in the upper right area of the MyWebCT page and use the “Basic” template to set up your course.

Instant Messenger:

“The world’s largest IM network has just gotten bigger—and better. With Windows Live Messenger you can now connect with your Yahoo! IM Contacts,” according to the Windows Live Messengers’ Web site. This is where you can download the free IM application at get.live.com/messenger. When the download is complete, you simply install the application as you would any other piece of software by following the onscreen instructions. If you plan on letting your students contact you through IM, make sure to include your user name/IM address on something they will keep, like your syllabus.

For any questions regarding WebCT or other general computer problems not related with WebCT, you can contact the U’s Campus Help Desk at 581-4000.
Is a degree enough for today’s college graduate to be competitive in the job market? Getting hired by reputable companies often requires more than a diploma, and there are a few things professors can do to help their students land the perfect job.

Patrick McShane, a counselor from Career Services at the University of Utah, pointed out several areas where professors can really impact their students’ success. This includes teaching students the technology they need to know to find a job within their desired field, helping them both write and build their resumes, and alerting them to any internship opportunities.

Jobs on the Internet

Many students between the ages of 18 and 30 grew up using computers and know how to surf the net to look for internship and job opportunities. Students like Karin Swanson, a junior at the U, uses the Internet on a regular basis. “I use it more than anything else because it’s right at your fingertips. It’s all right there for you, you just need to know how to look for it,” she said.

McShane said students who graduated just a decade ago used the newspaper as their primary way of looking for a job. With their reliance on technology students find much of their information from online sources; but they need to recognize what information is credible said McShane.

When students do begin a job search, a resume is the most important tool in the success of the searching process. “A well-crafted resume can help with job searches because it allows for immediate application of positions,” he said. Resumes can also help simplify the overwhelming process by having the first step done.

Formatting and composition are important and change depending on the student’s desired field. In-class resume workshops are a great way professors can help out in this area.

Once a resume is ready, the job search begins. Students can check out Monster, Hot Jobs and Career Builder, which allow them to easily upload their resumes and apply online at the click of a button. McShane said that these job-search engines may be useful, but they can also be confusing. Professors could help students by letting them know about industry sites that post useful and relevant job openings.

What else professors can do

The skills needed by students before entering the business world include learning many computer programs. Mikhael Mikhalev, a junior studying chemical engineering, said he has learned to use
some of the programs needed for his intended career, but he also knows of others that have not yet been taught in any of his courses. Making sure students get exactly what they need to be market-worthy is important. Know what professions your students want to pursue, and teach them the skills they’ll need to be competitive candidates.

A resume might be the first impression for employers when applying for a position, but students often don’t know what information to include and what is irrelevant, McShane said.

Lori McDonald, associate dean of students, said there are many thing student’s don’t put in their resumes because they don’t recognize the “transferable skills” they have learned during classes. “Skills that you learn from being involved like running a meeting, delegating duties and managing a budget are genuine skills that can be used in the career fields, but students don’t know it so they don’t include it on their resume,” said McDonald.

Julia Corbett, an associate professor in the U’s Department of Communications, teaches a course that gives students real-world experience in the classroom.

“Students tell me they want real-world experience and that they learn better by doing, not just reading in a text,” she said.

Corbett teaches the senior capstone course to communication students in the public relations sequence called PR: Cases and Campaigns. She believes it really helps her students understand more about their career field. “It helps them head into jobs with a more realistic understanding of the profession and, I hope, a better appreciation that writing and public relations is hard to do well,” Corbett said.

**Internships and industry ties**

McShane said internships are a great way for students to get real world experience and learn things that simply cannot just be taught in the classroom. McDonald agreed, saying things like leadership positions, part-time jobs and other similar experiences can teach students things like time management and communication skills, allowing them to develop useful skills they can list on their resumes.
“The experience also allows them to develop beneficial relationships for letters of recommendation and references,” McDonald said.

Professors can help students gain experience through their industry ties, McShane said. Professors often know about job openings, internships and other local opportunities. Announcing information about opportunities and openings in the classroom is helpful to students because many don’t know where to look.

McShane also said professors can also help their students by providing information about possible careers fields. This information can be provided by finding guest speakers with relevant experience or assigning students to interview someone in their desired professions to help create a connection and a better realistic understanding between students and their careers.

**Turn them on to Career Services**

The Career Services Center has career counselors who offer advice and other resources as well, McShane said. “General services that our office offers [include] student jobs, internships, resume help, Career Library, workshops, career positions, on-campus interviews and student-use computers.” The center also has an extensive career library with sample cover letters, resumes, books on job searching tips and more.

According to McShane, many students and even some faculty don’t know or don’t take advantage of the opportunities Career Services provides. “Statistics are good, but for a campus of 30,000 it’s ridiculous [how little career services are used],” he said.

Cortney Hurst, a junior at the U and a ballet major, said she was told about Career Services in LEAP, a seminar class for incoming freshmen. “Once, our peer adviser featured career services as part of our lesson. Other than that really, I have never been referred there. I don’t even know where it is,” she said.

Professors can let students know about the Career Services Center through the classroom. McShane suggests a direct endorsement from professors; whether it includes having a representative from Career Services come speak to a class directly or simply including the center’s contact information and a description in the syllabus.

The Career Services Center is located on the main campus in the Student Services Building. Contact Career Services for more information at 801-581-6186 or visit careers.utah.edu.
If you have heard about podcasting but don’t know anything about it, you are not alone.

The University of Utah Department of Marketing and Communications is in charge of podcasting at the U. Jason Smith, manager of the department and editor of Continuum magazine, said that podcasting allows faculty and staff to “record lectures, Q & A interviews [and] presentations by prominent visitors to campus,” and then his department provides the podcasts “via the Internet and students can download those either to a personal computer desktop or a smaller player like an iPod and take them with them wherever they go.”

The key element to making podcasts a useful tool for student education is getting students to download them. “Podcasting sorta has an ownership to it,” Smith said. The biggest distinction between a podcast and an audio file or a clip from YouTube is that a podcast is automatically downloadable, whereas other types of audio files often are not. Students can basically call podcasts their own and take them wherever they want.

According to Smith, “Some of the larger universities have been doing this for a few years now… in different ways. Some offer it for free, some charge for it, some have limited offerings… it’s all over the map,” he said.

Podcasting at the U

At the U, students and professors have to sign up for subscriptions for podcasts at www2.utah.edu/podcast. The great thing is that everything is totally free, and whenever there is a new podcast, it is automatically downloaded to your computer. This saves people the hassle of going to the Web site and finding and downloading each individual podcast.

Podcasting at the U is fairly new. It was introduced by the department of marketing and communications, and more specifically by Smith’s boss, Mark Woodland, who is the associate vice president of the department. “He was having some conversations with some people here in the department, and it just sort of blossomed,” Smith said.

The central Web site that showcases all the different podcasts from departments around the U has been available for a year now, however, one department that has been utilizing podcasting for even longer is the U’s College of Humanities.

The college has been making podcasts available for about two years. Their “Happy Hour” podcast is one that has sparked interest from many people. According to
Heidi Camp, assistant dean of the college, Happy Hour is when a group of people who pays a $100 yearly membership meets at Squatters for free hors d’oeuvres and drinks while they listen to someone speak about humanities topics each month. The topics vary from sexuality to poetry to history. The speaker’s lecture is then edited and downloaded to both the humanities Web site and the U's podcasting Web site. The monies collected from membership fees go to support college programs and to scholarships for students.

As of now, podcasting is still in the developmental stage at the University of Utah, but it's slowly progressing. Smith thinks that podcasting could eventually be used as a method of distant learning. Lectures can be prerecorded by the professor, be placed on the Internet, and then downloaded by the students to listen to. “A lot of learning will take place online,” Smith said.

According to Smith, the benefit of podcasts at this point is to showcase the U and the great speakers who come through the school. Drawbacks are lack of funding and lack of staff. Publications are the marketing and communications department’s primary focus, so podcasting often has to take a back seat.

Another drawback is that the U’s podcast is strictly audio. Some universities have videos and/or PowerPoint presentations to accompany the audio file, but at this point, the U does not. One reason why they don’t have visual media to accompany the audio is because files are too big. Smith said it best: “Many people don’t have the space to download a file that big, and quite frankly, they don’t have the time.”

The technology transition

After asking random students around campus, most of them admitted to me that they have heard of podcasts before,

*This paragraph has been edited, please refer to the lessons corrections page online at: www.ctle.utah.edu/lessons
but they don’t know exactly what it is. After surveying about 100 of the students in the communication 3550 class I took in spring of 2007, the results were shocking. When asked how many students have ever downloaded a podcast for usage, about 25 out of the 100 students raised their hands. Of those students, only four used them on a weekly basis.

Students said some reasons they do not want to use podcasts now or in the future are because podcasting seems too complicated, they don’t have time, and because they can get the information from other places. They said they don’t want to wait for things to download to their audio device (even if it is automatic) because they have other outlets that will allow them to view similar information whenever they want, and they don’t have to wait for them to be downloaded. They also said that they would rather listen to music on their audio devices than a lecture or speech.

Paul Rose, a professor in the communication department, said he knew what podcasts were, but was not a big fan, especially for using them as lectures. He doesn’t think that many people, including himself, would want to take time to download podcasts to their portable audio device. As for lectures, he likes the teacher-student interaction. “There’s something about face-to-face instruction that I like,” he said.

Rose is not totally against podcasting. He thinks it’s beneficial. “It’s just another outlet. If you’re going to create a message, you may as well use it as a podcast,” he said.

Smith said that the generations of people over the age of 35 are considered technological immigrants. Technological immigrants are those people who are fairly new to the developing computer world. Smith considers himself in this category. He said that technological immigrants can “navigate fairly well, but it’s still new to us.” Younger students could probably pick it up a lot faster. “Young people now days …they don’t even think the same way I do because of the way technology has changed,” he said. The way younger students look at the world, they way they relate to the world, the way they relate to each other has all changed, he said.

“[Podcasts] are harder for the teachers,” Smith said.

Technological natives, who consist of college and high school students, are people who grew up using new technology and are familiar with it. Smith said, “[Computer technology] is a part of their lives from start to finish. For me, podcasting is an add-on.”

That’s why it’s harder for teachers. “That’s why the students are usually [three] steps ahead of faculty and administration when it comes to things like [technology],” Smith added.

When I asked students what they knew about podcasting at the U, many of them thought it was part of the U’s KUER radio station. It’s true. KUER does podcasting of their own just like the U’s College of Humanities, but the central port for podcasting (which is the Web site developed by the marketing and communications department) focuses more on lectures, interviews and discussions that go on at the U.

Students and faculty are welcome to submit podcasts to put on the marketing and communications department’s Web site. For more information on podcasting or to submit a podcast, call Jason Smith at 801-581-3862 or e-mail him at jason.smith@ucomm.utah.edu.
Emily Alpin
“I am a senior majoring in mass communications and I plan to graduate in May 2008. I am interested in pursuing a career in features reporting and after I graduate I hope to find a job that includes writing and getting paid for it.”

Chanel Earl
“I am an English major in my last undergraduate semester. I work as an online tutor at the Writing Center, and as an editorial assistant for Wasatch Journal Media. Upon graduation I plan on pursuing a graduate degree creative writing while my husband pursues his degree in geography.

Taylor C. Farnsworth
“I am a junior at the U. I am studying public relations within the communication department. My future career plans include Event Planning/Event Relations and one day I hope to bring the Olympic Winter Games back to Salt Lake City.”

Ashley Freitas
“I am a junior majoring in economics. I would like to work as a reporter or host for the NFL Network after I am done with school.”

Lauren Mangelson
“I am a senior double-majoring in political science and communication with an emphasis in news editorial. I am a part-time writer for The Daily Utah Chronicle and am pursuing a career in the newspaper industry. I plan to graduate in Spring 2008.”

Naziol Nazarinia
“I completed a mass communication degree in the public relation sequence. I graduated in May of 2007 and plan on pursuing a career in event planning, promotions and marketing within the entertainment industry.”

Amy Osmond
“I received my BA and MA in English from Brigham Young University (1997, 1999). I am currently a fourth-year Ph.D. student in the department of communication at the University of Utah and am working on completing my dissertation. At Brigham Young University and the University of Utah, I have taught classes such as English composition, technical writing, and Essentials of Communication. I recently published an article on ideographic identification and discourses of fear and pride in Cultic Studies Review. I currently work as a freelance editor, writer, and graphic designer for numerous clients such as the Utah Attorney General’s office, Idea Group Publishing, OnBoard Baby Outfitters, Empire Realty, and the Sun Post in San Clemente. I am also a public speaking consultant for clients such as SynergEyes and was the keynote speaker for the City of San Clemente’s awards luncheon. My current academic interests include organizational identification, teamwork, organizational abuse, and organizational sustainability. I, and my husband, Jeff, have 3 children.”

Cara Wieser
“I received my MA in communication from the University of Utah in 2006. I am currently working as a freelance writer and editor, I taught in the communication department as a teaching fellow and as an adjunct instructor, and my writing has been included in numerous online publications, including The New York Times College Edition, CrazedParent.org, ExpectingRain.com and AnimalRights.net. I read one of my pieces on KUER radio, titled “After September 11: My Brother in the Military,” and I wrote for the Daily Utah Chronicle for three years as a reporter and as a columnist. I currently live between Salt Lake City and Santa Cruz, CA with my partner, Patrick.”
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