Teaching Bits: What’s New with CAUSEweb and MERLOT?

Michelle Everson
University of Minnesota

Ellen Gundlach
Purdue University

Journal of Statistics Education Volume 18, Number 2 (2010),

Copyright © 2010 by Michelle Everson and Ellen Gundlach all rights reserved. This text may be freely shared among individuals, but it may not be republished in any medium without express written consent from the authors and advance notification of the editor.

In our previous column, we gave an overview of CAUSEweb (www.causeweb.org) and MERLOT (www.merlot.org). These are two excellent resources for statistics educators who want to find new examples, activities, applets, videos, and other ideas for teaching statistics. We encourage you to think about ways you can use some of these resources in your own classrooms, and we welcome your suggestions about how we can continue to improve these collections of resources. In addition to adding some of your favorite resources to CAUSEweb and MERLOT, you can also help by signing up to review resources. If you would like more information about this, please contact us, and we’ll be happy to get you started.

In this column, we would like to highlight some recent new additions to CAUSEweb and MERLOT.

Have your students ever asked, “What do statisticians do?” An "Advising" section has now been added to the Resources page on CAUSEweb (http://www.causeweb.org/cwis/SPT--BrowseResources.php?ParentId=121). A screenshot of this page taken on July 5, 2010 is given below. The websites listed in this section are useful if you have students who are (a) excited about statistics and want to know more about what statisticians do, (b) considering majoring in statistics, or (c) applying to graduate programs in statistics. Perhaps not surprising to those in the Statistics Education community, Actuary (#1), Mathematician (#6), and Statistician (#8) make the top 10 list of best jobs for 2010.
Did you have the opportunity to attend last summer’s United States Conferences on Teaching Statistics (USCOTS 2009)? The speakers were inspirational, and there were so many good ideas shared at the conference that it was hard to absorb everything. If you missed the conference or would simply like another chance to hear the plenary session talks, the recordings are now available on CAUSEweb at www.causeweb.org/uscots/uscots09/program/. You can learn about innovative thinking from leaders in the Statistics Education community like George Cobb, Chris Wild, and Dani Ben-Zvi.

For an introduction to Chance News, see an April webinar in the Teaching and Learning series (recorded and posted on CAUSEweb): “Using (and contributing to!) the Chance News Wiki” (http://www.causeweb.org/webinar/teaching/2010-04/). This webinar was delivered by Jeanne Albert and Bill Peterson, the new editors of Chance News. Another great webinar, “Using Chance [Magazine] to Engage AP High School and Undergraduate University Students in the Study of Statistics,” was delivered in March by Dalene Stangl from Duke University (http://www.causeweb.org/webinar/teaching/2010-03/). Although Chance Magazine (published by the American Statistical Association) is not connected to Chance News on CAUSEweb, both
webinars present interesting ideas about innovative ways to incorporate media articles and current topics of interest to students into the classroom.

Other new features on CAUSEweb include a series of Activity webinars that involve using games to teach statistics:

- “Using the Online Dice-Based Golf Game GOLO to Illustrate Probability” by John Gabrosek and Paul Stephenson from Grand Valley State University (http://www.causeweb.org/webinar/activity/2010-03/)
- “Using Games to Teach Design of Experiments” by Shonda Kuiper from Grinnell College (http://www.causeweb.org/webinar/activity/2010-04/)
- “A Guitar Hero Based Project in Mathematical Statistics” by Ivan Ramler from St. Lawrence University (http://www.causeweb.org/webinar/activity/2010-05/)

Links to some of Shonda Kuiper’s games (from the Stat2Labs website: http://web.grinnell.edu/individuals/kuipers/stat2labs/) are posted now on both CAUSEweb and MERLOT. We hope these resources, and several others, will soon be reviewed, and, again, we encourage anyone interested in reviewing resources for CAUSEweb and MERLOT to contact us.