



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

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We are excited this month to begin a new feature in the Journal of Statistics Education. In each issue, we will take some time to talk about new resources for teaching that are available through the Consortium for the Advancement of Undergraduate Statistics Education (CAUSE, www.causeweb.org) and the Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching (MERLOT, www.merlot.org). If you have never been to either of these sites, we encourage you to check them out and think about ways you might incorporate some of the many resources on these sites in your own classrooms.

The CAUSEweb site (see [Figure 1](#) below) includes links to many great teaching resources (including computer and hands-on activities; lesson modules for lectures; out-of-class assignments such as homework, projects, and distance learning materials; datasets; cartoons and jokes; and different analysis tools). Those who visit the CAUSEweb site can learn about professional development opportunities in Statistics Education and research in the field. You can also find out about workshops and webinars related to teaching and learning statistics. Each month, CAUSEweb features two webinars. The “Teaching and Learning” series occurs on the second Tuesday of each month (usually at 2 pm Eastern time) and presents general topics in statistics education. The “Activity” series occurs on the fourth Tuesday of each month (usually at 2:30 pm Eastern time) and presents individual activities along with guidance on how to incorporate such activities in your own teaching.

By clicking on the Webinar link on the CAUSEweb home page, you can find archives of past webinars and can also sign up for upcoming webinars.

Recently, there have been Teaching and Learning webinars that have focused on topics such as learned helplessness in the statistics classroom, incorporating computer simulations and visualizations in teaching, and foundations in probability to support statistical reasoning. The most recent Activity webinars have focused on activities related to correlation and regression, chi-square, and understanding the standard deviation.

Figure 1: Screenshot of the CAUSEweb homepage

If you are new to CAUSEweb, please visit the site and register (for free) by clicking on the appropriate link in the menu bar along the left side of the page. By registering, you will be able to contribute your own materials to CAUSEweb, provide comments about existing materials, save any of your search results, and receive updates via e-mail.

When you first log on to the MERLOT website, you can become a member of MERLOT (for free) by following the directions on the right side of the screen. As with the CAUSEweb site, this will allow you to submit resources to MERLOT and share comments, in addition to setting up your own profile and building your own collection of resources from the existing resources on the MERLOT site. To search for resources related to teaching statistics, you need to click on the statistics link in the “Visit a Discipline Community” section on the homepage. This will take you to the MERLOT Statistics Portal (as shown below in [Figure 2](#)).

Figure 2: Screenshot of the MERLOT Statistics Portal

The MERLOT Statistics Portal is a joint venture with CAUSE and includes some links back to the CAUSEweb site. In addition, there are links that will allow you to search through the MERLOT statistics learning materials. Note that on both the MERLOT site and the CAUSEweb site, several resources have been peer reviewed, and we are always in need of reviewers. Anyone who is interested in reviewing resources for MERLOT and CAUSEweb should contact either Michelle Everson (Editor, CAUSE resource collection) or Ellen Gundlach (Associate Editor). A great way to learn more about the review process and to train to become a peer reviewer is to attend a session of MERLOT GRAPE camp. More information about this can be found at the following website: <http://taste.merlot.org/peerreviewer.html>.

Each month on the MERLOT Statistics Portal, we will showcase the latest webinars from CAUSEweb and also highlight exceptional statistics resources. Currently, we are proud to be showcasing the winner of the 2010 Merlot Classics Award in Statistics: The ARTIST website (<https://app.gen.umn.edu/artist/>). ARTIST is short for Assessment Resource Tools for Improving Statistical Thinking, this NSF-funded project that was led by Joan Garfield (University of Minnesota), Bob delMas (University of Minnesota), and Beth Chance (California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo). The ARTIST site includes a variety of assessment resources—including an assessment builder and many sample assessments—for teaching first courses in statistics. The ARTIST project will receive the MERLOT Classics Award at the Emerging Technologies for Online Learning Symposium to be held in San Jose, California July 20-23, 2010 (<http://sloanconsortium.org/et4online>).

Those individuals who are interested in online teaching and learning might also find it useful to browse through the MERLOT Journal of Online Teaching and Learning (JOLT). A link to this

journal can be found on the MERLOT website (<http://jolt.merlot.org/>), and you can subscribe (for free) to the journal in order to receive updates when new issues appear online.

[Volume 18 \(2010\)](#) | [Archive](#) | [Index](#) | [Data Archive](#) | [Resources](#) | [Editorial Board](#) | [Guidelines for Authors](#) | [Guidelines for Data Contributors](#) | [Home Page](#) | [Contact JSE](#) | [ASA Publications](#)