What's new with CAUSEWeb and MERLOT?

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Four hundred statistics educators gathered together on May 19th through May 21st when the fourth biennial United States Conference on Teaching Statistics (USCOTS) http://www.causeweb.org/uscots/ was held in Raleigh, North Carolina. The theme of the conference was "The Next Big Thing" in Statistics Education, and many great break-out sessions focused on topics such as randomization tests, qualitative research methods, AP statistics, the Common Core, online teaching methods, social media, assessment, and technology. USCOTS also included talks from several plenary speakers. Allan Rossman and Beth Chance, from California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo, kicked off the conference with a lively debate on what the next big thing in statistics education might be, and their presentation, along with some others from the conference, can be found at the following site: http://www.causeweb.org/uscots/program/. Other plenary speakers included Rob Gould (UCLA), who discussed modern statistics for modern students; Dennis Pearl (The Ohio State University), who shared his thirty year search for the next big thing; Wayne Stewart (University of Auckland), who talked about the second coming of Bayesian statistics; and Bob delMas (University of Minnesota), who reflected on future directions for statistics education.

During the USCOTS banquet dinner on Friday, May 20th, two big awards were presented. At

each USCOTS, a lifetime achievement award is given to an individual who, over an extended period of time, has made lasting contributions with broad impact to the field of statistics education. The 2011 USCOTS Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Dick Scheaffer (University of Florida, Gainesville). Previous winners of this award include George Cobb (Mount Holyoake College), Joan Garfield (University of Minnesota), and Roxy Peck (California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo). The CAUSEweb Resource of the Year award was also presented at the dinner banquet. The 2011 recipient of the award is The Chance News site (http://www.causeweb.org/wiki/chance/index.php/Main_Page).

In a post-conference survey that was completed by 185 USCOTS attendees, 98% of survey respondents said they would recommend USCOTS to their colleagues, and 91% said they plan to attend the next USCOTS in 2013. We hope you too will think about joining us for USCOTS 2013! As more details become available for the venue and theme of that conference, we will be sure to share them here.

Another exciting conference, the Emerging Technologies for Online Learning International Symposium, hosted by MERLOT (http://taste.merlot.org/mic.html) and the Sloan Consortium (http://sloanconsortium.org/et4online), was held in San Jose, CA from July 11th through July 13th. The conference keynote speaker was Bryan Alexander, Senior Fellow from the National Institute for Technology in Liberal Education, who spoke about "Imagining the Future of Education: Scenarios for Learning After Technology." For more information on the many plenary sessions, information sessions, featured sessions, cutting edge sessions, poster sessions, and streamed sessions that were a part of the Emerging Technologies for Online Learning conference, be sure to check out the online program at: http://sloanconsortium.org/conferences/2011/et4online/program.   Allan Rossman and Beth Chance were honored at this conference with a 2011 MERLOT Classics award for their extensive collection of applets (http://www.rossmanchance.com/applets), and this collection was showcased in a special session at the conference. You can find materials from that session at the following site: http://sloanconsortium.org/conferences/2011/et4online/rossmanchance-applet-collection.

As always, if you are searching for new activity ideas, or for guidance about how to teach certain concepts or topics, we hope you will check out the latest webinars that are now posted on the CAUSEweb site:

- "To teach statistical inference, try standing on your head" by Cliff Konold (Scientific Research Institute, University of Massachusetts, Amherst) http://www.causeweb.org/webinar/teaching/2011-03/

- "What proportion of the U.S. is within a mile of a road?" by Nicholas Horton (Smith College) http://www.causeweb.org/webinar/activity/2011-03/

- "Eat less salt, drink more wine, dump the cellphone, eat more salt, and live longer: Teaching students to understand the role of data collection in statistical inference" by Rob Gould (UCLA) http://www.causeweb.org/webinar/teaching/2011-04/

- "The role of a wine pricing competition in teaching data mining at Stanford" by Susan Holmes and Nelson Ray (Stanford University) http://www.causeweb.org/webinar/activity/2011-04/

- "Is Stats 101 prepared for the CC Student?" by Jerry Moreno (John Carroll University) http://www.causeweb.org/webinar/teaching/2011-05/

- "Active methods for teaching central tendency" by David Lane (Rice University) http://www.causeweb.org/webinar/activity/2011-05/

- "Create an Iron Chef in statistics classes?" by Rebekah Isaak, Laura Le, Laura Ziegler, and the CATALST Team (University of Minnesota) http://www.causeweb.org/webinar/teaching/2011-06/

- "Using crossword puzzles in applied statistics courses" by John McKenzie (Babson College) http://www.causeweb.org/webinar/activity/2011-06/

We also hope—especially for those of you who teach online or who may one day be developing online courses—that inspiration will come from reading articles that have been published in the Journal of Online Learning and Teaching (JOLT). The current issue of JOLT came out in June and it is available now for view on the MERLOT website http://jolt.merlot.org/currentissue.html). This particular issue includes articles on the use of honor codes to deter cheating in online courses, balancing quality and workload in online asynchronous discussions, the promise and problems of online education, and developing and implementing a blended course environment.

As we end this column, we want to ask that you please excuse the "dust" you might see when you go to the CAUSEweb site because we are currently in the process of renovating the site. We hope to launch a new site later this summer or early in the fall, and we will have more to say about this in our next column. Also, please remember there are many opportunities for you to become involved in reviewing resources for both MERLOT and CAUSEWeb. MERLOT Grape Camp is a great way to learn about how MERLOT works and how to become a peer reviewer of electronic resources that can be used in the statistics classroom. There are several upcoming sessions of Grape Camp, and you can learn more here: http://taste.merlot.org/peerreviewer.html.

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