

Education First

THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA ♦ COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ♦ NEWSLETTER

Education Firsts

Engen Creates First Online Microcounseling Course

"I've always used the latest technology," says professor emeritus **Harold Engen**, who—in the midst of his retirement—has facilitated the creation of one of the first online counseling skill development courses. Microcounseling (www.uiowa.edu/~ccp/courses/07c1783-index.htm) brings distance education into the 21st Century, allowing students from anywhere in the world to download instructional videos over the Internet.

Engen started using video to enhance his teaching in the early 1960s. Realizing that students needed direct observation, not just theory to become good counselors, he taped and played back student counseling scenarios for discussion. When the concept of microcounseling was introduced in the 1970s, Engen created a formal set of instructional videos—each addressing a specific counseling technique such as observing the client's body language, asking questions properly, or interpreting information correctly. These videos pushed available technology to the edge.

Putting Microcounseling online has created new edges. While Center for Credit Programs at The University of Iowa offers 70 online courses, among several distance education delivery methods, its server has not, until recently, had the capacity to deliver streaming video on web pages. Thus, when Engen adapted his course for online learners he had to simultaneously pursue the development of new digital technology—a lot of work for a retired professor. Engen hasn't minded, though. "It's not work when you're doing something you thoroughly enjoy and feel is beneficial to students," he said.

More than 70 students have taken the online course since its inception three years ago. Through this new technology, students enjoy such benefits as immediate access to course materials, increased opportunities to intersect with material interactively, and receive rapid feedback from the instructor. —by Elyse Fields



Toward Greater Understanding: After Sept. 11

"What does it mean to be human?" asked School of Religion Professor and Chair **David Klemm** during an interdisciplinary panel discussion of the events of Sept. 11. "Education is crucial in avoiding conflict," he said.

In an effort to educate for a better understanding of issues in the context in which they exist, the College of Education Diversity Committee hosted an interdisciplinary panel discussion for faculty, staff, and students. In addition to Klemm's presentation,



Panel participants: Chalhou-Deville, Klemm, MacDonald, and Rasheed

PHOTO BY DOUG ALLAIRE

religions, and traditions but they do overlap," she said.

Postdoctoral Scholar **Saba Rasheed** shared

in Afghanistan. "Most Americans are woefully ignorant about the ways the United States' foreign policy actually affects the lives of people half way around the world," he said.

A number of College faculty are available as resource consultants, including Associate Professor **Dan Clay** and Assistant Professor **Karen Cocco** for psychological trauma and Professor and Director of the Center for Teaching **Tom Rocklin** for teaching in a time of crisis. For more information online, please visit the College at www.education.uiowa.edu/help and the University at www.uiowa.edu/~ournews/newsupdates.html.



PHOTO BY DOUG ALLAIRE

The College hosted a blood drive on Oct. 4 and 35 faculty, staff, and students participated, including **Deb Kakavas** above.

Associate Professor **Micheline Chalhou-Deville** reviewed terminology and language of the Arab world. "The Arab world consists of many different people, countries, languages,

personal reflections as a Pakistani-American Muslim. Department of Geography Visiting Assistant Professor **Kenneth MacDonald** spoke about the intense diversity within cultural groups

November 2001

College Outreach

Student's History Education Grant Bridges College/Community

Go ahead, roll the die. A one? Your great-great grandfather's diary about farm life during the 1800s was destroyed in a fire. A three? All the letters sent home from Gettysburg during the Civil War by a distant cousin who fought for the Confederate Army were lost during a move. A six? You're in luck. A family tree compiled by Great Aunt Edna was carefully preserved and survives to this day.

The exercise isn't a game, exactly. It's a novel approach to teaching history, in this case a lesson on how few historical documents manage to survive the ravages of time. And it's one way Educational Policy and Leadership Studies doctoral student **Elise Fillpot** believes history education can be made more engaging, interactive, and personal for elementary school students.

Fillpot secured a \$701,133 U.S. Department of Education Teaching American History grant for the Washington Community School District to improve the way history is taught in elementary schools. She worked extensively with the College's **Grants and Research Services Center** and credits as well the Washington Community School District and the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum—which is also assisting in the project—with helping her assemble a compelling grant proposal.

The grant, one of the largest ever secured by a College graduate student and the only award received in Iowa, is one of sixty projects in 33 states to receive three-year awards.

Fillpot's project, "Bringing History Home," is a professional and curriculum development project for kindergarten through sixth grades in the Washington Community School District. It seeks to connect children with the concept and excitement of historical inquiry. In partnership with the University of Iowa and the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library-Museum, the project proposes to: develop a state-of-the-art K-6 history curriculum; adapt lesson plans to include the contributions of disadvantaged and minority groups to American history; provide professional development activities to 29 Washington elementary teachers

with an emphasis on source-based research and teaching methods; and implement and evaluate the curriculum developed through the efforts of the project.

Fillpot said she wanted to work with the Washington Community School District because the district has a reputation for being receptive to innovations in their curricula.

"Washington plays a critical role in this project because it really serves as an incubator for curricula and ideas that can eventually be adopted by elementary schools everywhere," Fillpot said. "As a result the district could become a leader in rejuvenating history education, not just in Iowa, but across the country."

The history curriculum Fillpot envisions will make history more engaging for students by encouraging them to create their own historical narratives, to examine local history with a critical eye and learn basic research methods. Even children who cannot yet read and write will be able to use pictographs and art to create historical narratives.

Assisting Fillpot in the project will be two history experts at the Hoover Library-Museum, director Tim Walch and education specialist Mary Evans, who will co-direct the grant with Fillpot.

Walch said Fillpot's project is unique for many reasons, not the least of which is that it will involve an unprecedented level of intergovernmental cooperation.

"What we're excited about is it reflects teamwork between a federal agency, a state agency and a school district," Walch said, adding that the Hoover Library-Museum is donating time and expertise to the project. "You hardly ever see that."

—by Stephen Pradarelli



Doctoral student Elise Fillpot plans to improve the way history is taught in elementary schools.



PHOTO BY DOUG ALLAIRE

Achrazoglou shares enthusiasm for technology with international guests.

A group of international dignitaries learned how exciting and innovative educational technology can be during a visit to campus.

Sponsored by the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the international educators, administrators, and policy-makers who oversee educational policies related to the

Technological Initiatives Draw International Visitors

use of technology learned new ways to integrate technology into curricula for improved student achievement. Visitors represented Armenia, Bahrain, Bulgaria, Ghana, Macedonia, Syria, Taiwan, Tunisia, Uruguay, and the West Bank.

The group also identified methods to close the "digital divide" and increase accessibility of technology in their classrooms.

John Achrazoglou, the College's coordinator of technology, presented Web-based distance education technologies,

the ePortfolio project, and assistive technologies for learners with disabilities.

"I see projects like this as an opportunity to broaden the visibility of the College," said Achrazoglou, "and foster international understanding, cooperation, and outreach."

Education First is produced monthly by The University of Iowa College of Education Office of External Relations, Jill Fishbaugh, director. Send items of interest to her at The University of Iowa/College of Education/452 Lindquist Center N/Iowa City, IA 52242-1529 or by e-mail to educationatiowa@uiowa.edu.

The University of Iowa prohibits discrimination in employment and in its educational programs and activities on the basis of race, national origin, color, creed, religion, sex, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or associational preference. The University also affirms its commitment to providing equal opportunities and equal access to University facilities. For additional information on nondiscrimination policies, contact the Coordinator of Title IX, Section 504, and the ADA in the Office of Affirmative Action, (319) 335-0705 (voice) and (319) 335-0697 (text), 202 Jessup Hall, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa 52242-1316.