

**Peer Teaching Observation Report of Dr. Greg Newby
Spring, 1999
by
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We met with Dr. Newby for a pre-observation meeting on Monday, 4/12/99 in preparation for observing his INLS 80, Data Communications, class on Tuesday 4/13/99. Greg has taught this Internet-focused material in some form for 11 years, and we discussed his teaching philosophy for the course and his specific strategies. The course WWW pages, we observed, are very information-rich and class policy/grading criteria are explicit and well presented to the students. As Greg noted, undergraduates need very directed work and clear guidelines. Also, he spoke of the challenges of keeping undergraduates motivated and focused, especially in this part of the term where only a project, but not a final exam, is left to do. The class is a large one with about 30 students, and indeed only 20 were present on the day we observed.

On the day we observed, Greg began with discussing assignment details and reminding students of the context of the next few classes. His discussion took place while the machine for display was rebooting, which was a bit distracting, but the information being conveyed was largely available in the detailed notes and on-line course information. In general, during this and other portions of the class lecture, Greg's delivery was comfortable and information-rich. He maintained eye contact with the class and made clear his points. Students asked questions here and at later times about class procedure, expectations on homework assignment, specific technical issues they were facing, and lecture content. They seemed comfortable in speaking up and the class atmosphere was relaxed. Greg provided clear answers to content questions and procedural questions, promising to post additional information in his on-line pages in response to one request.

Our primary comment on Greg's class delivery is that it is sometimes rapid and too dense, perhaps, for students to capture all the information. In many cases this concern is mitigated by material on-line for students to review, and the information richness made the class interesting. We wish to encourage Greg to be aware of this tendency towards rapid-fire delivery and consider ways to compensate for this where appropriate.

The class lecture content was presented as an HTML lecture with Greg's narrative to amplify the points. It was an interesting review of security issues and hackers on the Internet. Greg's lecture was well-organized, mixing the broad picture of the general issues with specific, up-to-date information from on-line resources and providing ample additional links for students who wanted to go beyond what the class time limitations allowed. Greg clearly has a good grasp of the material and the teaching experience to present it in an effective manner. We also noted that he ends his lecture with thought questions and ways for students to relate the information in the lecture to their own experiences.