

June 2002



Greetings!

Welcome to the Web Institute for Teachers 2002! This is our sixth summer, and it promises to be the biggest and the best WIT yet. We have tweaked our already-exceptional curriculum, trained and hired an awesome group of mentors and lab assistants, arranged lab space, and worked our way through the largest applicant pool ever. We're ready, and we hope you are too.

There's one thing about WIT that you may not realize but that is quite clear to those of us who are involved with running it. WIT seems to be about the technology: how to make Web pages; how to search; how to put an image in just the right spot; how to do cool mouse-overs and embed audio. But WIT is really about teaching and learning, and about reconfiguring the relationship between teachers and learners. To us, technology is a tool that we can use to improve teaching and learning. You've heard the old saw about how the "sage on the stage" has to give way to the "guide on the side"? Well, when you create a web-based lesson or a curriculum web, you create an opportunity for you to take that step off the stage, to work more as a coach for your students, and less as the dispenser of knowledge. Good teachers already adopt the "coach" approach; technology provides an opportunity for you to do it more effectively and in a more systematic way.

Also, even though you'll spend most of WIT wrestling with your computer trying to get it to do things that seem obvious to you, we hope you'll also take some time to THINK about what it is you are trying to do as a teacher and what it is you are trying to help your students to do. Reflection is a rare commodity in today's schools, and the summer is a great time to do it.

Thanks for the book you hold in your hand are due most of all to Frada Boxer and Ellen Dairyko (the "handouts queens"), and also to the other participants in the WIT 2002 mentor training class: Russ Revzan, Nicole Zumpano, Mitchell Marks, Christie Thomas, Bill Geraci, John Lyman, Mecca Murphy, Darlyne Delaney, Stuart Vanorny, Connie Amon, Terry Jones, Edie Fabiyi, Janet Gray-McKennis, and Mario Wiggins.

And if there is anything I can do to improve your summer experience, please don't hesitate to contact me immediately. By phone, at 773-702-4885; by email: c-cunningham@uchicago.edu.

Craig A. Cunningham, Ph.D.
Director, Web Institute for Teachers
Center for School Improvement, University of Chicago
<http://webinstituteforteachers.org>