

Building Community with the Internet

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Two years ago the Advanced Placement Program (AP) introduced an E-mail List Server for Advanced Placement European History Teachers. Currently there are approximately 1,200 secondary school teachers in North America and Europe who are teaching a year-long survey college-level course in AP European History; all have access to the same teacher's guide and teaching materials. One of the teachers is paid a modest honorarium to serve as the editor of the list, to screen new messages for inaccuracies and possible rude remarks. Use of the list serve is restricted to teachers - no students. Currently there are approximately 120 teachers who have chosen to participate; each receives between 5 - 10 messages per week. Information is exchanged on textbooks, source material, valuable websites (example: websites with accessible Renaissance documents), fellowship and study opportunities, simulations, role-plays and other activities to enrich classrooms. Teachers also discuss how to pace their courses and how to work with different students' learning styles. Teachers also discuss examination questions, and critique the national, year-end course examination after it is administered in May. We are adding 10 - 20 teachers a month, and expect soon to have half the teachers who are teaching the course as subscribers; none have "un-subscribed", and many have told us the list serve is valuable and improves their teaching.