



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Mr. Doug Tomilson
Director
Academic Technologies for Learning (ATL)
University of Alberta
2-111 Education North
Edmonton, Alberta

Tuesday, April 11, 2000

Dear Mr. Tomilson:

This letter is long overdue. I am a sessional instructor of an English 199 course ("Writing Essentials for Engineering Students") that I have for the first time this semester placed on WebCT. I am writing to thank your department for the continued support I have received in planning and delivering various aspects of computer-assisted and computer-managed instruction.

I want to highlight, in particular, the tremendous work of Norm Friesen who has not only guided me through the "mechanics" of WebCT (i.e. preparing documents for the web, uploading materials), but also pointed out some pedagogical possibilities of a learner-focussed environment (i.e. online quizzes, group conferencing). Norm is a very patient and skillful teacher.

One of the most practical (skill-based) uses I have found for WebCT in the kind of professional technical writing course I teach to engineering students has been a collaborative writing project implemented through group conferencing. There remain many more improvements and innovations to be made at the level of curriculum development and course delivery. I do, however, believe that WebCT can be used to enhance the kind of critical thinking and critical writing skills I'm trying to teach.

This past year, ATL has enabled me to understand web-based curriculum development as a process involving many stages (i.e. needs assessment, usability testing, evaluation), unforeseen challenges, and unexpected rewards. I commend your department for all its hard efforts. Thanking you once again for your time and consideration, I remain,

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Grace De Sousa".

Grace De Sousa
492-7030 (Office)
430-1418 (Home)

cc. Norm Friesen

Department of English