

# Idaho Virtual Campus; using the Internet to discover new techniques in science education

[Harvey, Jacqueline](#); [Taube, Vita](#); [Boyack, Diana](#); [Hughes, Scott S](#); [Anonymous](#). **Abstracts with Programs - Geological Society of America** Vol. 32, Iss. 6, (April 2000): 18.

Idaho Virtual Campus (IVC), a multi-institutional cooperative program, provides an entirely web-based alternative to live classroom and televised courses thus greatly expanding the geographic reach of college level science instruction. Idaho State University's IVC (<http://wapi.isu.edu/>) and its companion program, the Digital Atlas of Idaho (<http://imnh.isu.edu/digitalatlas>) are two of several complementary web-based instructional growth areas at ISU. Upper-division courses in Anthropology, Biology, Geology and Physics are being developed for IVC while creating a broad, multi-disciplinary program that provides well-balanced, quality education in the natural sciences. Course evaluations, and knowledge proficiency as determined by grades on exams and term papers show that teaching effectiveness is enhanced when material is designed to utilize the Internet in its intended capacity: as a knowledge library to be explored, and as a multi-media system for sharing information. Less gratifying are attempts to utilize the Internet as a substitute for the classroom experience by simply posting required readings and lecture notes without using interactive projects-oriented instruction. Personal feelings and spontaneity, which are lost in the web experience, are replaced with other forms of human interaction such as phone, e-mail, chatrooms and field trips. Some of these difficulties have been overcome in geoscience IVC courses by utilizing tasks that require student participation in subject modules. While IVC courses provide an intense and successful learning environment, they are incapable of fulfilling all of the requirements for learning critical thinking, and understanding geologic processes that are best observed in the field. Thus, new IVC courses are being developed as projects-oriented modules, each of which includes a tutorial field exercise with examples of data evaluation. The virtual exercise is followed by an actual field exercise, including data collection and a final report. The rationale behind offering field exercises is to design a projects-oriented curriculum that makes the best use of the Internet.