

Astronomy Education Review

Volume 3, Oct 2004 - Apr 2005

Issue 2

An Essential E-mail List Collection for Teaching Astronomy 101

by **Timothy F. Slater**

University of Arizona

Posted: 04/11/05

The Astronomy Education Review, Issue 2, Volume 3:119-121, 2005

© 2005, Timothy Slater. Copyright assigned to the Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy, Inc.

With this short guide by AER Editorial Board member Tim Slater, we kick off a new series of opinion pieces to which we invite our readers' response. Responses we deem most worthy of publication will be added to the original article on a timely basis. We reserve the right to edit the responses we publish for length and appropriateness. We also welcome suggestions for future opinion topics and volunteers who want to write one. So, if you agree or disagree with Tim Slater's choices for the most useful e-mail lists, or have other suggestions to add to his list, let us hear from you.

—Andrew Fraknoi and Sidney Wolff

After several discussions at the January 2005 AAS San Diego meeting and a final public push from Rob Knop (Vanderbilt), it occurred to me that it would be a worthwhile endeavor to provide a personal opinion, certainly not the final word, on my favorite and essential e-mail lists (also known as LISTSERV mailing lists) for Astronomy 101 teachers. There are, of course, countless daily e-mails that one could receive, but for our purposes here, in the age of information overload, I share with you what I have been led to believe is essential for those engaged in teaching astronomy. The criterion here is that these are e-mail lists that *one reads regularly* in the service of teaching Astronomy 101. Let me emphasize *read regularly*. Like everyone else, I certainly am on too many e-mail lists already, and I have a lot that I delete daily or delete usually, so I feel compelled to constrict the parameters of this list to those in the *must-read* category. I am certain that others exist, and their omission here is not a judgment of their quality; it is just that I do not successfully find time to read them.

1. E-MAILS ON ISSUES SURROUNDING TEACHING

- **ASTROLRNER**—<http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/astrolrner>
Academic discussion group for the teaching of astronomy and astronomy education, with emphasis on astronomy misconceptions, instructional strategies, and assessment procedures. The group focuses on teaching and learning issues and represents members of the AAS, ASP, AAPT, and many others. Traffic rate estimated at four per month.
Subscribe by sending a blank e-mail to astrolrner-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
- **ASTROED_NEWS**—http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/astroed_news
This is the electronic newsletter for individuals involved in communicating astronomy to learners of all ages. The group is coordinated by the Astronomical Society of the Pacific–Association of Astronomy Educators, an affiliate of the National Science Teachers Association, and shares astronomy and space science education opportunities for teachers and EPO professionals. Often included are astronomy education, public outreach, and professional development opportunities, and teaching job postings. Traffic rate estimated at four per month.
Subscribe by sending a blank e-mail to astroed_news-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
In the interest of full disclosure, I should note that I moderate both ASTROLRNER and ASTROED_NEWS.
- **ASTRONOMY EDUCATION REVIEW**—<http://aer.noao.edu>
The *Astronomy Education Review* is the core journal for individuals engaged in the teaching and learning of astronomy at all levels. Articles appear online soon after they are accepted, but an e-mail is distributed to all subscribers each time a volume is closed and paginated. Traffic rate estimated at three times per year.
Subscribe by completing the form at <http://aer.noao.edu/aerreg.php>
- **NASA JPL CENTER FOR ASTRONOMY EDUCATION**—<http://astronomy101.jpl.nasa.gov>
Individuals who participate in the NASA JPL Center for Astronomy Education group focus on issues surrounding teaching non-science majoring undergraduates, primarily at two-year institutions. The mailing list provides teaching hints and tips, and announces available teaching workshops. Traffic rate estimated at one per month.
Subscribe by selecting the JOIN button at <http://astronomy101.jpl.nasa.gov/forum>
- **TOMORROWS-PROFESSOR**—<http://ctl.stanford.edu/Tomprof>
Tomorrows-Professor Mailing List provides e-mails twice weekly, usually on Monday and Thursday mornings. The mailing list seeks to foster a diverse worldwide teaching and learning ecology among its over 21,000 subscribers at over 600 institutions and organizations in 108 countries. To date, there have been over 600 postings under the following categories: Academy, Graduate Students and Postdocs, Academic Careers, Teaching and Learning. A link to search for individual postings is also provided. It is an invaluable resource for teaching and learning in the college and university environment. Traffic rate is two per week.
Subscribe by sending the message *subscribe tomorrows-professor* to Majordomo@lists.stanford.edu

2. E-MAILS ON ISSUES SURROUNDING CURRENT ASTRONOMICAL EVENTS

- **ASTRO PH**—<http://arxiv.org/archive/astro-ph>
If you need to know what has just been printed in astrophysics research, a daily must read is astro-ph. This is a pre-print server for astronomy/astrophysics. To be honest, most of the articles are too

specialized or advanced for Astro 101, but I get this because I want to pretend that I am up to date on the latest research results.

Subscribe by sending an e-mail to astro-ph@arXiv.org with the following subject line: *subscribe Your Full Name*

- **DAILY SIGNIFICANT IMAGERY REPORT**—<http://www.osei.noaa.gov/>
The Operational Significant Event Imagery team produces detailed, high-resolution imagery of significant Earth and environmental events that are visible in remotely sensed data available at the NOAA Science Center in Suitland, Maryland. The e-mail report outlines the events captured in satellite imagery and provides a direct link to each image. The images are described with short narratives. I do not get any images within the e-mail, so you do have to go to their Web site when something interests you, but this generally isn't a problem. I tend to turn this on when I am teaching earth science or planetary science, then turn it off again to keep my e-mail box from being cluttered. Traffic rate is one per day.
Subscribe at <http://gp5.ssd.nesdis.noaa.gov/OSEIHsub.html>
- **JEFF BENNETT MUSINGS**—<http://jeffreymbennett.com>
Every couple of months or so, Jeff sends out a detailed narrative about things to notice in the sky or other important goings-on that astronomy teachers should know about. The e-mails are well thought out and infrequent enough that when they show up, you definitely want to read them! Traffic rate is estimated at six per year.
Subscribe by sending an e-mail to spacenews_bennett@lists.awl.com. Put the word *subscribe* in the body of the message.
- **SCIENCE AT NASA**—<http://science.nasa.gov>
Science stories and involvement projects that bring the cutting edge to people interested in science. It is more public relations based than professional astronomer based, but has great resources for keeping up to date for your students. Traffic rate is anywhere from two to five news stories each week. There is also a Spanish language version.
Subscribe at <http://science.nasa.gov/news/subscribe.asp>
- **UNIVERSE TODAY**—<http://www.universetoday.com>
Universe Today is different from your regular news Web site. Instead of writing in-depth articles, they provide an overview and links to sites where you can get more detail—from where the news first breaks to all of the media coverage—and even related resources. They find all of the stories, even the really obscure ones, and gather them into one fast, easy-to-read newsletter free of technical jargon. One only needs to spend 10 minutes a day to be completely up to date on all of the breaking news in the space industry. E-mail traffic rate is one per day.
Subscribe at <http://www.universetoday.com/>

Acknowledgments

Folks who helped me compile and refine this list include Gina Brissenden, Tom Foster, Catherine Garland, Michael Huster, Janet Landato, and Alex Storrs, among others. A special acknowledgment goes to Dr. Rob Knop at Vanderbilt, who finally pushed me over the edge by publicly asking me what my favorite e-mail lists are.

ÆR

119 - 121