

Supercourse Newsletter
September 8, 2006

www.pitt.edu/~super1.edu
www.bibalex.org/SuperCourse/Index.htm
www.bibalex.org/english/initiatives/SupercourseArchive.htm

“Wired, Tired and Retired”

During the past few weeks we have been talking to several groups about helping to build an expert “Reach back” system. The concept is simple. Suppose you are responding to the Bam Earthquake in Iran, and you are a public health person. You see a building leaning but with people crying inside. You do not have expertise in structural engineering, however, perhaps you can “reach back” to experts in Los Angeles, Tokyo, or Santiago who can help. We have been thinking about this as we have the largest network of public health people in the world, who have already responded during the Tsunami, the Bam Earthquake, Katrina, etc.

It might be interesting to build a new network, a “retirement network”. I am 57 years old, the arrows and knives of academia are festering in my back. I begin to think of retirement as a way to leave the life table of academia. There are many of us around the world like me, “wired”, “tired” and “retired”.

Middle age is when work is a lot less fun and fun is a lot more work. ~Author Unknown (science is fun, politics is not)

I was wondering that perhaps we should build a network of retired scientists to provide reach back capabilities to help world wide.

I am trying to think of ways to network those who are about to be retired, or who are retired, not only in Global Health, but engineering, physics, psychology, etc. Please write to me at ronlaporte@aol.com if you would like to help build a Retirement Supercourse.

Don't simply retire from something; have something to retire to. ~Harry Emerson Fosdick (Let's retire to a Senior Supercourse)

Supercourse Pedagogy: We received considerable comments concerning Pedagogy. One thing that is perfectly clear, is the very, very few universities have training on how to teach. Graduate students wrote to us indicating how much they need programs like this. Many of us are thinking now: No training in teaching, no Ph.D. Each world wide that teaching about prevention should have a program to teach students how to teach.

Legacy Lectures:

Sadly, James van Allen died Aug. 10, 06 at age 91. Two months before his death he contributed a Supercourse legacy lecture of his life, something we will all cherish. He was very pleased to discuss his scientific life in the Supercourse.

When I was a child, Van Allen was indeed a “rocket” scientist, the brightest of the bright. He was an icon to many people my age of the power and excitement of space science. Few scientists discover something in space, the van Allen radiation belt, and then to have it named after you. Here is a NYTimes article describing Dr. van Allen. <http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F50813FA345B0C738DDDA10894DE404482> .

It is indeed an honor that right before his death he contributed an overview of his life and accomplishments so that future generations of young scientists could understand him, and his accomplishments. We have developed a first draft of the van Allen Legacy lecture and this can be found at: <http://www.pitt.edu/~super1/lecture/lec24841/index.htm> . We are indeed pleased to present this to honored scientists such as you. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we had legacy lectures for all IOM, NAS and Nobel Prize winners like Dr. van Allen's?

It is wonderful for us to be able to immortalize the words, life and reflection of great people like Dr. Van Allen. His lecture will live on, and we hope that yours will also.

"He was a legend among scientists, the father of physics in space in the United States,"

“Space is the hole we are in -- a vast area of human ignorance. The history of the world shows that attacking ignorance is fruitful.”

This brilliant man spent a few minutes developing a lecture for the Supercourse for future generations. It is indeed a legacy for us all. This is very humbling.

Supercourse translation milestones.

Dr. Nicolas Padilla from University of Celaya in Mexico has been one of the strongest supporters of the Supercourse development. Dr. Padilla translated 175 Supercourse lectures from English into Spanish, allowing Supercourse to reach into remote areas of Mexico and other Spanish speaking countries. Dr. Padilla's next milestone is to have 250 translated lectures by December. Dr. Padilla is an excellent epidemiologist and a great friend. Thank you Nicolas!!!!

Lecture of the week

Supercourse is proud to have another lecture from India in the Supercourse collection. Dr. Ashish Trivedi, Assistant Professor in the Department of Preventive and Social Medicine, Government Medical College, Bhavnagar, Gujarat, India provided us a beautiful lecture entitled “Cohort Study”. It provides a beautiful outline of what is a cohort study, the aims of cohort studies, and ways to analyze them. This lecture can be accessed at

<http://www.pitt.edu/~super1/lecture/lec24751/index.htm>

Best regards from Pittsburgh...

Ron, Faina, Mita, Eugene, Nicholas, Ali, Julia, Francois, Saida, Legacies of the world

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