

---

## EDITORIAL

It gives us great pleasure to introduce a special issue focusing on the Chick-fil-A case study and how it was used in multiple classes in this issue. We had the great fortune to obtain excellent help from Ms. Claudia House of Nashville State Technical College who ensured that all the articles went through the review process and were acceptable for publication. In addition, we want to point out a few changes that have been instituted regarding the journal.

The journal will be published twice per year, with each publication combining two issues similar to what we did in 2002. That is, volume 4 (2003) would have two printed issues (1&2 and 3&4) that will be released during June and December 2003. This change will make it easy for us to inform the authors when their articles will be published and enable us to put this information on the web.

The journal is now electronically searchable using Ebsco Academic Search Elite services and ProQuest. You can access the articles if your organization subscribes to these services. The journal is also listed in the Gabell's list of journals in Education. These initiatives make the journal accessible to a larger body of academicians and researchers.

A website [www.jsmet.org](http://www.jsmet.org) has been created to provide information about the journal. The journal is now being developed and produced by the Institute for SMET Education and Research, a registered non-profit entity. We urge you to contribute generously to this institute and further the cause of SMET Education.

**P.K. Raju and Chetan S. Sankar**

## GUEST EDITORIAL

Through my prior work with SEATEC, I'm often asked what roles case studies play in undergraduate education today. Many faculty have experienced case studies at the graduate level, but are not sure how valuable they can be in an undergraduate setting. The same three questions seem to be most prevalent. How can we cover all of the necessary materials and points if we use case studies? How can we use case studies and objective tests in a 16-week semester? Aren't we doing our students a disservice by not covering all of the material in the textbooks before we send them out to work in the "real world"? My answer is always the same: we can't, very carefully and not by a long shot! While using case studies in the undergraduate classroom may result in an inability to cover every chapter in the course textbook, the end result is a student who can apply ideas and concepts learned rather than just being able to restate them on a test or apply them to a lab exercise. This student now has classroom experience that translates into an advantage during a job interview, which just doesn't show up on a degree transcript or in a GPA. Case studies can be used as capstone projects, as pre and post measurements of learning, and as ways to show the students how to apply what they've just learned in group and individual exercises that may last anywhere from one class to several weeks. In addition to the useful course material learned, a good case study also teaches students the following vital skills: how to interact within a group, how to be a leader, how to think actively and critically and how to integrate basic communication, math and science skills into technical courses.

It is precisely this description of a good case study, which makes the Chick-fil-A case study presented in this issue of the Journal of SMET so applicable to so many courses and programs. As evidenced by the articles in this issue, this case study can be used fully or in part in both 2-year and 4-year programs in business and technical programs.

Michael Garrison gives us an insider's look at the impact the operating system has on a fast food establishment. Through his job as Director of Information Technology Client Services in the Information Technology Department at Chick-fil-A, Mr. Garrison provides a look at the case study development process and how it benefits both the company and the students.

Victor Mbarika contributes an excellent literature review as he discusses the higher-level cognitive skills his graduate business students utilized in participating in a multimedia case study. The results of this experiment show that student success was very high and the classroom work was extremely applicable to the workforce skills required today.

Daniela Margitu discusses her experiences implementing the Chick-fil-A case study in a computer science class at the undergraduate level. Her article provides an invaluable review of literature and a detailed study of the student feedback from her course. She also relates the many ways she was able to utilize this case study in creating her course and describes how industry support of the case made using this case study a unique experience for both herself and her students.

Mary Kirtland, Bryan Barnett, and Mythreyee Ganapathy from Microsoft provide an overview of the .NET framework. This paper describes the essential components of the .NET framework, including the common language runtime, base class libraries, the services framework, and the programming models for building and integrating applications over the web. As students debate the options between NT and CE in the Chick-fil-A case study analysis, this article shows the need to consider newer frameworks.

Linda Theus furnishes readers with a valuable literature review for using case studies in the classroom. She also illustrates how the Chick-fil-A case study emphasizes the education to work connection by showing students how what they learn in the classroom is applied in the workplace. She proves that using this case study in the classroom gives the students more valuable educational experiences than just covering all of the material in the textbook.

Patrick Klesius' article illustrates the student perspective on creating case studies and using them in the classroom. Through his participation with the LITEE team, Mr. Klesius gained invaluable work experiences, which made him a more valuable potential employee when he was ready to enter the job market.

Jim Graf shows us how the Chick-fil-A case study can be used in a Systems Development and Design course. He reiterates the value of adding writing, presentation, team building and leadership skills practice to technical courses in order to make students better prepared for the demands of today's workforce.

Andy Redman and Chetan Sankar provide an excellent literature review on team building and creating face-to-face vs. virtual teams. Both Auburn and Louisiana State University students used the Chick-fil-A case study and the results and conclusion provided by Drs. Redman and Sankar clearly illustrate the importance of using case studies in the classroom. The research provided in this article proves that there are many possibilities for connecting students at different schools to work together in virtual case study teams.

We at the Journal of SMET hope that you will find this case study and these articles as rewarding as we did and we look forward to receiving feedback from you!

**Claudia Spivey House, Guest Editor**