Teaching Mineralogy, Petrology, and Geochemistry in the 21st Century
National Association of Geoscience Teachers (August 7-13, 2011)
By John Brady

This was the third national workshop I have attended on teaching Mineralogy and/or Petrology. I hosted the first workshop at Smith in 1996 with the support of an NSF grant. The second was at Montana State in 2003, and I was one of the organizers of that workshop, as well. This third workshop was held at the University of Minnesota, with one of my former students as an organizer.

These workshops have been very important to my pedagogical development as they assemble members of the professorate in my discipline who have a passion for their teaching. Because they have had a disciplinary focus, these workshops consider approaches that are specific to my classes as well as to broader educational issues. They have created an excellent network of colleagues who I can consult when considering problems or new ideas about teaching.

Mark Brandriss and I collected a number of samples on the field trip that will be useful in our teaching and saw some amazing field relations.

I learned many things at the workshop, from instructional ideas using an iPad to an appreciation of meta-cognition as a pedagogical tool. The feature of these workshops that I might convey to other faculty members is the infrastructure that has been developed in the geosciences, growing out of these workshops, to provide a national online source for teaching materials. These resources are hosted on a website at Carleton College (http://serc.carleton.edu/index.html).