

Creating a Virtual Learning Community

Fall 2002

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Announcing Online Course Donation Program

To supplement the variety of courses available through the Virtual Learning Community library, instructors are encouraged to consider donating courses they have developed for potential use by other instructors in the NCCCS.

Donated courses must be listed in the NCCCS Common Course Library or Master Course List. They must be available in Blackboard format and contain only materials that do not violate copyright law. The zipped course file must be no larger than 25MB. Any course meeting these qualifications, including an alternate version of a course developed by the VLC, is welcome.

Courses will be made available for use “as is” to instructors in the North Carolina Community College System via the VLC development server. In the future, donated courses may also be edited by the Virtual Learning Community project.

To donate your course, contact the Project Coordinator at hollandsn@ncccs.cc.nc.us. He will send you an authorization form, which will require your signature and the signature from your college president or instructional administrator. Once this is returned, your Blackboard Administrator will be contacted to facilitate transfer of the course to the VLC development server.

System Office Distance Learning Web Site Upgraded

The System Office distance learning web site, http://www.ncccs.cc.nc.us/Distance_Learning, is in the middle of an extensive upgrade. Visit it to sample new features available in five sections.

The first section of the site is “Locating Distance Learning Courses.” Here you can connect to the FOLDER database of DL courses around the NCCCS, look at historical lists of online learning

offerings sorted by college or course number, or link to the DL web site of any college in the system. Upcoming improvements include a list of degrees available at a distance from North Carolina community colleges.

The second section of the site documents the Virtual Learning Community. Read the archive of newsletters, view a list of available VLC courses, learn how to preview or download a course from the development server, or just study the standards that guide VLC development. More features will be added soon.



The third part of the new site will help you make distance learning contacts. Look here for lists of each college’s distance learning and Blackboard server administrators. Find members of the VLC Steering Committee or Distance Learning Council. Other contacts are coming soon.

The fourth section is for “Developing Distance Teaching and Support Skills.” Here you can link to the Online Course Template or Principles and Techniques of Online Instruction course. You can read the Virtual Counseling Guide. Many more features are in the works.

The final section, coming soon, will be full of links to some of the best distance learning information on the Internet.

Visit this new site, bookmark it, and come back often to discover more about distance learning! If you have suggestions for content changes or additions, contact hollandsn@ncccs.cc.nc.us.

VLC Development and Editing Teams for 2002-2003

Centers, developers, and editors have been selected for the 2002-2003 VLC development cycle. Forty-two courses will be added to the existing library of 112 courses, making required coursework for 10 degrees available from the VLC. Forty-four existing courses will receive edits, refreshing them for ongoing use.

Teams will work from October to May, with courses scheduled for availability to colleges by June 15, 2003. Please share your thanks, in advance, with the following individuals:

Center 1—Public Service Technologies Nash CC

Coordinator Karen Hicks

CJC 113	Juvenile Justice
Amy Harrell	Nash CC
Dawn Palmer	Montgomery CC
Larry Vick	Fayetteville Tech CC

CJC 212	Ethics & Community Relations
Kristie Baity	Forsyth Tech CC
Tim Thomas	Alamance CC

CJC 231	Constitutional Law
Michael Drew	Nash CC
Robert Powell	Central Carolina CC

COE 111	Cooperative Work Experience
Betty Brame	Wilkes CC
Priscilla Prevette	Johnston CC
Wanda Thomas	Craven CC

COM 231	Public Speaking
Ron Layne	Sandhills CC
Ken Robol	Halifax CC

EDU 116	Introduction to Education
Sue Moyer	Fayetteville Tech CC
Libby Vagnoni	Central Piedmont CC
Patricia Weaver	Fayetteville Tech CC

EDU 119	Early Childhood Education
Eleanor Armstrong	Wayne CC
Sue Johnson	Fayetteville Tech CC
Erin Smith	Johnston CC

EDU 146	Child Guidance
Kassie Hollar	Catawba Valley CC
Christine Krumsiek	Central Carolina CC
Brice Melton	Catawba Valley CC

EDU 221	Children with Special Needs
Lorie Barnes	Wake Tech CC
Ginger Bishop	Nash CC
Lynn Coates	Piedmont CC

EDU 261 & 262	Early Childhood Administration I & II
Claudia Anderson	Sandhills CC
Robin Griffin	College of The Albemarle
Ronda Hawkins	Sandhills CC
Jennifer Johnson	Vance-Granville CC
Jeannie Proctor	Alamance CC
Carolyn Steele	Piedmont CC

Center 2—Business Technologies Fayetteville Tech CC

Coordinator Cheryl Thomas

ACC 129	Individual Income Taxes
John Daugherty	Pitt CC
Vicky Koonce	Craven CC
Dennis Sheridan	Fayetteville Tech CC

BUS 135	Principles of Supervision
Joyce Hewett	Brunswick CC
Sharon Kendrick	Fayetteville Tech CC
Valeria Truitt	Craven CC

BUS 217	Employment Law
Lynn Coleman	Coastal Carolina CC
Jeff Penley	Catawba Valley CC
James Sisk	Gaston College

BUS 252	Labor Relations
Linda Sanders	Fayetteville Tech CC

BUS 256	Recruitment & Personnel Planning
Ralphael Brown	Randolph CC
Knowles Parker	Wake Tech CC

FIP 124	Fire Prevention & Public Education
Ronnie Holton	Coastal Carolina CC

HOR 160	Plant Materials
Kim Yates	Mayland CC

MKT 225	Marketing Research
Diane Kannarr	Central Carolina CC
Sharon Seaford	Fayetteville Tech CC

OST 148	Medical Coding Billing & Insurance
Bill Hess	multiple colleges
Lynn Jennings	College of The Albemarle

**Center 3—Computer Technologies
Central Piedmont CC
Coordinator Ron Williams**

CIS 113	Computer Basics
Debra Baker	Beaufort County CC
Joyce Barnes	Halifax CC

CIS 153	Database Applications
Rick Lee	Central Piedmont CC
Jane Pendry	Guilford Tech CC

CIS 174	Network Systems Manager I
Tonya Stephens	Catawba Valley CC
Mardi White	Forsyth Tech CC

CIS 246	Operating Systems-UNIX
Fred Bisel	Craven CC
Jeff Madre	College of The Albemarle

CSC 239	Adv. Visual Basic Programming
Joe DeCampo	Coastal Carolina CC
Larry Farrer	Guilford Tech CC

ELC 128	Introduction to PLC
Tim Brown	Nash CC
Randy Ludington	Guilford Tech CC
Becky Taylor	Wayne CC

ELN 133	Digital Electronics
Jerry Clendenen	Central Carolina CC
Lawrence Lafferty	Craven CC
Donna Shumate	Johnston CC

ITN 130	Web Site Management
Kathie Doole	AB Tech CC
Heather Wright	Caldwell CC

ITN 150	Internet Protocols
David Biddix	Mayland CC
John Smith	College of The Albemarle

ITN 160	Principles of Web Design
Lenora Buckland	Pamlico CC
Jo James	Isothermal CC

**Center 4—Arts and Sciences
Asheville-Buncombe Tech CC
Coordinator David Smith**

ART 115	Art History Survey II
Gary Freeman	Gaston College
Danajean Mabry	Surry CC

BIO 140	Environmental Biology
Gail Galbraith	Alamance CC
Sherry Ratzlaff	AB Tech CC
Laurel Young	AB Tech CC

BIO 165	Anatomy & Physiology I
Jessica Brown	Central Carolina CC
Marta Klesath	Central Carolina CC
Chris Sowers	Wilkes CC

ENG 232	American Literature II
Dara Llewellyn	AB Tech CC
Bryan Oesterreich	Beaufort County CC

ENG 241 & 242	British Literature I & II
Joe Argent	Gaston College
Patricia Bostian	Central Piedmont CC
Twyla Davis	Bladen CC
Marty Ellis	Catawba Valley CC
Elizabeth Hardy	Caldwell CC

GEO 111	World Regional Geography
Ken Rudolph	AB Tech CC
Deborah Wilson	Sandhills CC

HIS 222	African-American History I
Vince Castano	Fayetteville Tech CC
Richard Eller	Catawba Valley CC
Rex Etheridge	College of The Albemarle

HUM 160	Introduction to Film
Joe Bryant	Halifax CC
Lynn Ward	Piedmont CC

MAT 070	Introductory Algebra
Richard Allen	Pitt CC
Sonya McCook	Alamance CC

PSY 237	Social Psychology
Ken Duffy	Fayetteville Tech CC
Sylvia Haith	Forsyth Tech CC
Roger Webb	Catawba Valley CC

Editing at Center 4:

COM 120	Interpersonal Communication
Laura Morrison	College of The Albemarle
ENG 113	Literature-Based Research
Nell Evans	Wake Tech CC
HUM 115	Critical Thinking
Ella Hairston	Guilford Tech CC
PSY 281	Abnormal Psychology
Beth Ann Hughes	College of The Albemarle

Center 5—Editing Center

Wayne CC

Coordinator Michelle Turnage

ACC 150	Accounting Software Applications
Aletta Lane	Randolph CC
ACC 225	Cost Accounting
Tracy DeHart	Halifax CC
BPR 111	Blueprint Reading
David Humphrey	Bladen CC
BUS 110	Introduction to Business
JoAnn Farmer	Wayne CC
Elaine Simmons	Guilford Tech CC
BUS 115 & 116	Business Law I & II
Felix Nyako	Rockingham CC
BUS 153	Human Resource Management
Linda Nelms	Southeastern CC
BUS 225	Business Finance
Donna Sanders	Guilford Tech CC
BUS 230	Small Business Management
Cynthia McKoy	Bladen CC
BUS 260	Business Communications
Lynda Hodge	Guilford Tech CC
CIS 110	Introduction to Computers
James Wetterau	Wake Tech CC
CIS 130	Survey of Operating Systems
Mary Ellen O'Shields	Central Carolina CC
CIS 147	Operating System-Windows
Deborah Brien	Guilford Tech CC
CIS 172	Introduction to Internet
Nanette Stillwell	Pitt CC
CIS 216	Software Install/Maintenance
Jo Wilson	Pitt CC
CIS 220	Spreadsheet II
Mary Clemmer	Gaston College
CJC 111	Introduction to Criminal Justice
Wayne Durkee	Durham Tech CC
CSC 139	Visual Basic Programming
Betsy Jones	Gaston College
HEA 110	Personal Health & Wellness
Mary Barden	Martin CC
HUM 110	Technology & Society
Tami Thrasher	Piedmont CC
LEX 110	Introduction to Paralegal Study
Lisa Duncan	Central Carolina CC
MAT 151	Statistics I
Kelly Fowler	Gaston College

MAT 161	College Algebra
Chuck Wessell	Durham Tech CC
MED 121	Medical Terminology I
Beth Hooks	Wayne CC
MKT 120	Principles of Marketing
Diane Tyndall	Craven CC
NET 110	Data Comm/Networking
Rita Rogers	Roanoke-Chowan CC
NUT 110	General Nutrition
Scott Clinefelter	Pitt CC
OST 136	Word Processing
Sharon Bull	Wayne CC
OST 236	Advanced Word Processing
Brenda Abbott	Johnston CC
POL 120	American Government
Deana St. Peter	Guilford Tech CC

Still in Need of Editors at Press Time:

ACC 120	Principles of Financial Accounting
ACC 121	Principles of Managerial Accounting
BUS 121	Business Math
BUS 137	Principles of Management
BUS 238	Integrated Management
BUS 239	Business Applications Seminar
CSC 148	Java Programming
MAT 115	Mathematical Models
MED 122	Medical Terminology II
MKT 123	Fundamentals of Selling
MKT 220	Advertising & Sales Promotion

Coursework for Many Degrees Available through VLC

By using the VLC library, your college can now offer the required coursework for the following degrees online:

- Associate in Arts (College Transfer)
- Business Administration AAS
- Information Systems AAS

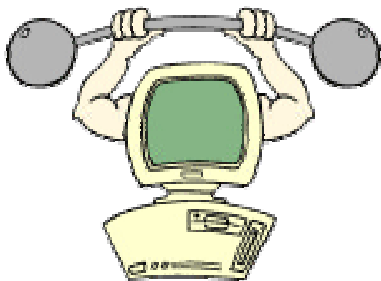
At the end of this year's development cycle (June 15, 2003) the following degrees will also be available:

- Accounting AAS
- Business & Marketing Education Pre-Major AA
- Early Childhood Education AAS
- Elementary Education Pre-Major AA
- Internet Technologies AAS
- Middle Grades Education Pre-Major AA
- Office Systems Technology AAS
- Social Science Education Pre-Major AA
- Special Education Pre-Major AA

Hybrid Learning—Adding Online Elements to Face-to-Face Courses

Ability to teach online is an increasingly important skill for community college instructors, but many experienced educators are nervous about making the leap into the online classroom.

Other instructors are ready to teach online, but cannot see how a particular course can be taught at a distance.



The solution for both of these dilemmas is the “hybrid” course, taught through a combination of online instruction and classroom instruction.

Hybrid learning is an important bridge between the two forms of education. It’s a great way for instructors to wade into online teaching without having to risk failure. The steps below provide ideas and guidance for hybrid instruction.

Begin by setting up a web site.

The DL administrator at your college can help with this step. Ask for a Blackboard course site, which allows many instructional possibilities. Those new to online instruction may need training, but the software is easy to learn.

Focus on features you will use and save the rest for later. Your server administrator can add student accounts to the site if needed. Materials on the course site are only available to students in the course or others for whom you allow access.

Build a document archive.

The best start is to make course documents available on the course site. This is a great way to reduce paper costs because you can then ask students to print documents themselves instead of running copies. No more excuses for lost

documents, as students can get a fresh copy from any computer with Internet access.

Placing documents online is as simple as copying and pasting text or attaching document files to the course site. The collection, potentially including syllabus, lecture notes, handouts, assignment guidelines, or anything else you want online, becomes a centralized location from which any future edits to materials are made.

Consider reducing class meetings.

With activities conducted online, face-to-face meetings with students can occur less often. They’ll be grateful for fewer trips to campus while you increase variety in your instructional repertoire. The reduction in building use will save your college money and allow scheduling of more sections.

Try discussion forum activities.

Many students are intimidated by face-to-face discussion. Give them the time and anonymity of an online discussion board and they may blossom, contributing well to many topics.



Online discussions allow leisurely consideration of questions, problems, or scenarios. If you post interesting questions (called “prompts”), require each student to respond, or even better, require an opening post and a response to at least one classmate, you will have an educationally rich assignment that takes little instructor work.

Explain response standards and etiquette expectations in advance to get best results. With practice, students become experts at online discussion, and you will rarely need to intervene.

Make use of links.

Textbooks can be restrictive. Students tire of them. To add variety and access more content, use web sites in your hybrid class.

Use reference links to help students complete assignments or build skills. Ask them to collect topical links as an assignment. Have them evaluate sites to build critical thinking skills while picking up needed content. Potential activities are almost boundless, so don't ignore this fantastic source of content and teaching ideas.

Get student contributions and feedback.

Many students have web site building skills. Get them to help build the companion site for the course. They can find links, locate graphics, and build pages as group projects.

If you aren't sure about what to put online, ask students. They may be a source of excellent ideas for your hybrid course.

Consider online assignment exchange.

By exchanging assignments online, paper use is reduced. There is less risk of lost papers because a fresh copy of the file can be requested.

Word-processing software now includes collaborative tools. For instance, the "Track Changes" option in Microsoft Word allows insertion of highlighted suggestions directly into student documents, which they then accept or decline. Grade drafts this way and require students to use suggestions to revise the final paper.

Another idea is to use online file exchange to get students to constructively critique each other's work before grading the final product.

Build the course site as you go.

The beauty of hybrid courses is that you can do as much or as little as you want. As the course proceeds, add documents and links to the site. Try student activities when you feel ready. You can build a site without student access one semester, then admit students the next semester.

If your ultimate goal is to offer the entire course online, build a hybrid course one semester in as much detail as you can. The next time you offer the course, it will take very little work to expand the web site into a full online offering.

Consider collaborations and guests.

Another educational possibility of hybrid learning is extended contact with guest speakers. Since

online teaching doesn't require everyone to run on the same schedule, you can introduce experts who can't attend the course but might be willing to field questions or share information.

Another great idea is to get students in your course to work collaboratively with students at another college, or in a related course on your own campus. Use discussion forums, chat sessions, or small group assignments with web-posted results to get them together.

Try a VLC course.

In many cases, the Virtual Learning Community has developed a course you teach. These materials can be used for more than online courses.

Each course is divided into modules, so try a module online while teaching the rest face to face. Take advantage of links in the course. Try a few assignments. Or simply offer the VLC course as a supplement to students who want more sources of content or help. It's easy to hide or delete content from a VLC course that you don't want students to see.

Online Learning College Showcase

This article is part of our ongoing series about distance learning efforts at colleges in the NCCCS. In this issue, we feature Carteret CC.

A Small College Success Story

Kay Dennis, Distance Learning Director, Carteret CC

Although we are one of the smaller schools in the System in terms of enrollment, we more than make up for it in the size of our commitment to students. Rick Hill, Director of Student Enrollment Resources, has found over the years that concerted efforts to follow prerequisite requirements pay big dividends in student satisfaction and success in online courses.

We emphasize that distance learning is not for everyone—it requires motivation, independence, discipline, and time management, in addition to

strong reading and computer skills. We now require students to complete our Distance Learning/Blackboard Online Orientation before they can register for their first online class; and we anticipate including it with the placement tests routinely administered to all entering students.

Distance learning at CCC began in the mid-1990s, thanks largely to the pioneer spirit of art instructor Patrick Keough. Patrick's courses, which foster student engagement, are among the first to fill each term. He has shared his "sanity strategies" with other instructors, in particular a folder system for managing the volume of student email.

Lunch hour jam sessions now provide a forum for exchange of ideas by new and experienced online instructors. Faculty who attend conferences share their new insights in workshops sponsored by the DL Director. A continuous and successful quest for financial support has enabled faculty development of enhancements such as interactive video modules for CD-ROM or web-based delivery.

We have found some courses more successful as "Partial Internet" courses, with a combination of required campus and online elements. For example, several Business Technologies instructors use Blackboard for posting assignments, discussion, and course notes. Even though the class is not delivered online, instructors make content available online.

Our enrollment and number of distance learning courses have increased substantially as we try to anticipate and respond to trends in education, legislation, and demographics. For example, as the college age population increases and university fees rise, more students want transferable general education courses. Recent legislation affecting teacher associates, heightened demand for paralegals, and the new East Carolina University partnership for teacher education have all prompted changes in online offerings.

Add to this mix a group of "on-fire" faculty with excellent technical support, and the result is a steady increase in what we can offer our constituents. Instructors benefit as much as students, in very meaningful ways. Thanks to distance

learning, instructors discover they can strike a healthy balance between career, personal, and family commitments. We have one instructor who is fulfilling a longtime dream by taking sabbatical leave to Ireland to finish writing a book. Another can attend her son's ball practices. Distance learning truly can help make dreams come true.

For a small college we do have a lot going on! This year we aim to identify specific academic programs in which all courses can be offered online, normalize the use of Blackboard as "home-room" for every course, and introduce a DL Instructor Handbook.

Your College Web Site—Making a Home for Distance Learners

The college web site is the first stop for potential online learners. They will decide whether or not to take courses based on what they find. Later, as students progress through a semester, retention rates, the number of mistakes made, and the time faculty and staff spend answering or re-routing questions will also be greatly affected by the quality of the web site.

Sandhills CC now has a higher retention rate for online courses than face-to-face courses. The quality of support on their web site probably has a great deal to do with this success. The following list will help you evaluate your college web site and identify missing content.

1. A centralized web site for online learners

Online learners should be able to connect to everything they need from links on one centralized web page. Don't send them on a scavenger hunt through every corner of your college web site for the different pieces of content they will require.

2. Faculty/staff directory

With only the name or subject area of a potential contact, students should be able to find contact information for every person who works for your college, including both full-time and adjunct instructors and support staff.

Make sure that the general distance learning contacts listed include administrators, technical

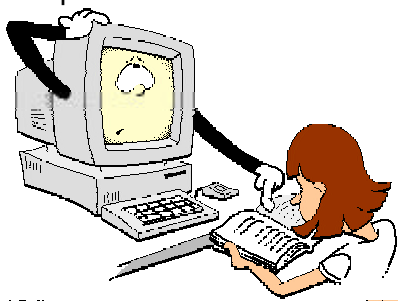
support, online counselors, librarians and others from whom students may need help.

The student should be able to find email address, phone number, office number, job title, and department. A picture and some personal information will humanize contacts at a distance.

3. List of online courses

It's impossible for an online learning program to grow if students can't find what is available. List current, upcoming, and past courses that will be offered again. Also list courses in development.

List hybrid courses that require online access and face-to-face courses that offer supplemental online content, but be clear about which courses are which. The course list should include a number, name, instructor information, and links to the course syllabus or other course content so students can preview.



4. College catalog

In addition to a list of online courses, the full college catalog should be available online, with program and graduation requirements, university transfer options, policies, and more.

5. Registration forms

Online enrollments will be limited if students must come to campus to enroll. At minimum, registration forms should be available online that can be printed and mailed in. It's even better if forms can be completed and submitted online.

6. Orientation for distance learners

Required on-campus orientation for distance learners sends a negative message about the capabilities of online learning. At minimum, most orientation content should also be online.

Orientation should cover how to access the course, minimal and optimal computer specifications, introduction to support resources, descrip-

tions of online learning practice, preview of the assignments students can expect, training in course delivery software, introduction to online research options, and relevant college policies.

7. Links to student support services

Online students need services as much as face-to-face students, and many on-campus students prefer to access services online. Student services are a critical part of the web site.

Services should include information and contacts for academic advising, financial aid, career counseling, disability services, registrars, libraries, and bookstores. A college calendar should be available. When possible, customize information and practice to improve their utility for online students.

8. Instructions for common tasks

Instructors should be spared the burden of providing instructions for common tasks to each student. A distance learning web site should include instructions for tasks like submitting assignments via the Drop Box, participating in discussion forums, checking grades, taking online tests, downloading files, and installing required programs, plug-ins, and viewers.

9. General online research tools

Both online and face-to-face students will benefit if the college maintains or links to a set of great online reference resources. At minimum, include the NCLive collection all students can access, but also include search engines, reference sites, writing style guides, study skills help, and distance learning advice. The campus library should be part of this online presence.

10. An online learning self-evaluation with remedial advice

Many students are not prepared for their first online course and some may just not enjoy this style of learning. Self-evaluation can help students decide in advance if this kind of course is for them. Include questions about equipment, technical skills, learning style, software experience, organization, interaction preferences, procrastination, and self-reliance.

In addition, provide links that students can use to gain skills they discover that they are lacking.

11. Access to course sites

One great advantage of online courses is that they allow students to make more educated selections of which courses they will take. This cannot happen, however, if advance access to course sites is impossible without a password.

At minimum, students should be able to see a syllabus and sequence for each online course. In fact, this information should be provided for all courses (and if universally available, can save the cost of many printed catalogs.) Sample content and assignments are a nice addition.

In addition, try to make every aspect of at least one exemplary sample course available to those who wish to explore online learning.

12. Myths and realities of online learning

Many myths about online learning persist. These lead to bias against online learning or misguided expectations of what a course will be like. Those who hold misconceptions might include your faculty and administration. Such bias can result in active campaigns against online learning.

Post answers to these misconceptions on the college web site. Include information about the difficulty level of courses, the interaction students have, who takes online courses, and more. Misconceptions expressed by one are probably shared by many others. Answer them in advance on the web site.

13. Faculty help

Faculty, whether online or in a classroom, also need advice about how to best provide online materials and instruction. Include instructions on how to create a new course site, advice for recycling courses at the semester's end, information about how student accounts are added and removed from courses, instructions for common tasks in Blackboard, advice about online pedagogy, time management hints, and techniques for handling large amounts of email.

Also helpful are links to information about online teaching, collections of free clip-art graphics, mentoring programs with experienced online instructors, and copies of the Principles and Techniques of Online Instruction course and Online Course Template from the VLC.

14. Success stories

Finally, in addition to the practical advice above, encouragement and self-praise is also important. Document distance learning successes online. These might include students who earned online degrees, students who would not have been able to attend college without distance learning, instructors who never thought they could teach online but did, new courses that have been added, and other successes that your distance learning program wants to share.

New Information System Begins Rollout



After years of planning, rollout of the new Community College Information System project is underway. The goal is to implement a modern, efficient, integrated information system that meets the administrative operations and information management needs of all 59 institutions.

Budget for the project is \$55.4 million with scheduled statewide implementation by June 30, 2005. A Steering Committee of college presidents, senior managers, and key System Office management guides the project.

The project has two main phases:

- Phase 1—Planning and pilot with eight colleges, to be completed in Fall 2002
- Phase 2—Statewide implementation in three groups of sixteen or seventeen colleges completed between 2002 and 2005

Primary contractor for enhancement, implementation and support is Affiliated Computer Services (ACS). Primary software vendor is Datatel, providing their Colleague software, including financial, human resources and student information system modules. Datatel also provides third-party software packages to support web-based student services through a 'portal,' a voice

response system for telephone registration, and other features.

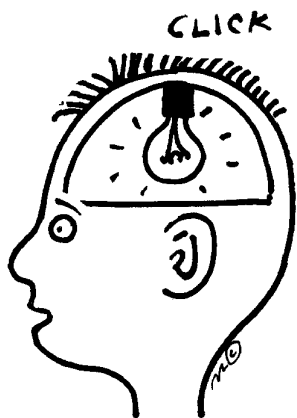
The CampusCruiser student portal is of interest to colleges that provide online courses since it will be capable of sharing a single user ID and password with Blackboard. CampusCruiser is integrated with Colleague's WebAdvisor that provides student schedules, calendars, and access to other services including the shared online library catalog. Online admission applications will be handled through the College Foundation of NC (www.cfnc.org) web site.

Future enhancement to the information system and data warehouse will provide access to student transcripts from multiple colleges for those authorized for that access for advising, etc.

Extensive information about the project is maintained on the System Office web site at: http://www.ncccs.cc.nc.us/IT_Projects/CIS_Project/Project%20Background/cis_project_menu.htm.

20 Ways to Grow an Online Learning Program Wisely

Online learning continues to grow in popularity. Use the methods from this article to help your online program grow intelligently.



1. **Set online learning goals**

Don't just wait for online courses to happen, plan for them. Set goals, but not just for the entire college—set DL goals for each division, each department, each employee.

2. **Build a winning team**

Online instruction is a team activity. Build a working committee of all the players including administration, faculty, technical staff, continuing educators, librarians, student support staff, and student representatives. Meet regularly, collaborating to create a strong DL program.

3. **Watch the web site**

Since online learners are Internet users, their first point of contact will usually be the college web site. Make sure that it contains answers for the needs of distance learning students and sends a positive message about the college's ability to provide online services.

4. **Sign up student services**

In some ways, online student services should receive even more emphasis than online courses because even face-to-face students might prefer to ask for support online. Make sure all student services have an online presence and that staff are prepared to fill off-campus requests.

5. **Provide faculty incentives**

Devise rewards for creation of new online courses or instructors' first attempts at online teaching. If money and time don't allow extra pay or course load reductions, consider other rewards such as allowing more work hours off campus, access to good computer equipment, preference in course scheduling, enrollment caps, recognition programs, or other creative awards.

6. **Design distance degrees**

In addition to general growth of online learning, target a few specific degrees to bring online. This is the best way to bring new enrollments to the college. Work with universities or employers to create programs where online graduates receive preference in moving on to jobs or further degree programs.

7. **Provide professional development**

Training in online instruction and support should be a ubiquitous part of any faculty or staff event. Train on a variety of DL subjects, through a variety of methods, offered in a variety of time frames to reach the widest possible audience.

8. **Factor DL into hiring**

In addition to turning current faculty members from online novices to experts, infuse online faculty with the strength of new hires. Make ability and willingness to teach online a consideration in the hiring process.

9. **Measure room use reduction**

The long-term cost savings of online education will be in reduced building use and ultimately,

less need for renovation and construction. Demonstrate this benefit of distance education to funding agents by measuring hours of room use saved by online and hybrid courses.

10. Breed hybrid courses

Hybrid courses—classroom courses requiring some online activity—are a great way for instructors and students to experiment with online instruction. They reduce building use and photocopying while adding flexibility to instructor and student schedules. Most important, they allow use of the advantages of a variety of educational approaches in the same course.

11. Create an archive of instructor help

Reduce the time commitment of online teaching by providing instructors with a variety of advice on designing and administering online courses. Offer templates to reduce the time it takes to make quality materials. Share course content and teaching strategies.

12. Make one clear point of contact

Consider hiring an administrative or teaching assistant to serve as a single point of contact for all current and potential online learners. If well trained, this person can troubleshoot technical problems, help students find courses, interface with instructors, build help archives, and connect online learners with student services.

13. Use Virtual Learning Community courses

Over 110 complete courses are now available in a variety of subjects, with more in development all the time. There is no cost except the time it takes to adapt materials to local college practice and instructor preferences. Even intensive adaptation is quicker than building the same course from scratch. Use VLC materials to offer a full online course, support a face-to-face course, or just borrow assignments or support documents.

14. Start course creation from a template

There are dozens of common elements shared by all good online courses. Why build these from scratch each time a new course is begun? Use the VLC Online Course Template or design one for your college or department. This way, you will save your design inventiveness for something other than reinventing the wheel.

15. Prepare to use online adjuncts

Adjunct faculty who teach online for several different colleges are becoming common. It's a great way for a college to add extra sections at the last minute or offer a few specialty courses without paying for full-time specialist instructors. Set policy in advance for how your college will check the credentials of such instructors, monitor course quality, and balance their needs with those of on-campus faculty.

16. Minimize on-campus requirements

When online courses require campus attendance for orientation, testing, labs, student services, meetings, and assignment exchange, truly distant students are shut out. A negative message about the efficacy of online instruction and support is sent. While on-campus *options* are good, use creativity and flexibility to eliminate on-campus *requirements*.

17. Target likely online populations

Tailor online programs to likely populations and market courses to them. For instance, working students, advanced high school students, stay-at-home parents, the technically inclined, those in armed services, international students, new enrollees, and those who work in declining local industries might be good starting points.

18. Counter negative myths

Some believe online courses don't have an instructor or don't ever involve interaction between students. Others think online courses are too easy, or conversely, too hard. Some stay away because they expect requirements for special equipment or extra expenses. Others mistakenly plan to take a course on a computer they can only occasionally access. Use your web site and other methods to respond. Provide public examples of students who succeeded online.

19. Teach instructors online andragogy, not just software

When training faculty, don't just teach the use of software. Instead, provide practical strategies for designing online materials, organizing online students, handling online assignments, and managing time pressure. Put software use in the context of online instruction. Try the VLC Principles and Techniques of Online Instruction (PTOI) course for a starting point.

20. Consider teaching assistants

An online instructor can handle only a limited number of students, but by using lower-cost teaching assistants to help with grading, screening easier student questions, and other assistance, an instructor can manage larger sections.

VLC Courses Receive Fresh Edit

The library of Virtual Learning Community courses has been updated. Thirty-four of the existing courses went through an editing process, which fixes broken links, updates textbook changes, and refreshes course content.

VLC courses will continue to be refreshed with the goal of editing each course at least once every two years, sooner when textbook editions change or other major problems are in need of correction. In the 2002-2003 cycle, 44 courses are scheduled for edits.

Thanks to those who improved these courses:

ACA 111	College Student Success
ART 111	Art Appreciation
CIS 110	Introduction to Computers
CIS 111	Basic PC Literacy
CIS 115	Introduction to Programming & Logic
CIS 120	Spreadsheet I
CIS 130	Survey of Operating Systems
CIS 147	Operating System-Windows
CIS 152	Database Concepts & Applications
CIS 165	Desktop Publishing I
CIS 169	Business Presentations
CIS 172	Introduction to Internet
CIS 215	Hardware Installation/Maintenance
CIS 216	Software Installation/Maintenance
CIS 286	Systems Analysis & Design
CJC 111	Introduction to Criminal Justice
CJC 121	Law Enforcement Operations
CSC 134	C++ Programming
ECO 251	Principles of Microeconomics
ECO 252	Principles of Macroeconomics
ENG 111	Expository Writing
ENG 112	Argument Based Research
ENG 113	Literature Based Research
ENG 114	Professional Research & Reporting
ENG 131	Introduction to Literature
HIS 121	Western Civilization I
HIS 122	Western Civilization II
LEX 110	Introduction to Paralegal Study
MUS 110	Music Appreciation
NET 110	Data Comm/Networking

POL 120	American Government
PSY 150	General Psychology
SOC 210	Introduction to Sociology

Virtual DL Conference Coming

Set aside time from January 21-30, 2003 for a Virtual National Conference sponsored by the North Carolina Distance Learning Alliance. The



conference will be held at a distance, so participants can choose any time during those dates to participate from any computer with Internet access. The conference's theme will be "Access and Delivery: Keys to Learning in the 21st Century."

The event will be book-ended by Information Highway events available at several locations and also streamed over the Internet. Throughout the event, DL leaders from around our system will moderate asynchronous presentations and discussion groups devoted to distance learning.

Participants will have a chance to ask questions, compare solutions, or share their brightest distance learning ideas. Special guest speakers and participants from outside of North Carolina will be invited. After the conference, reports on will be shared via the web. Vendors will demonstrate new products and services.

If you have questions or would like to volunteer to help with the conference, contact Bill Randall, brandall@forsyth.cc.nc.us. While the deadline for the official call for presentations is past, some space may also be available for those who would like to propose online conference sessions. Information about the conference can be found at <http://www.dlalliance.org>.

Connie Cerniglia of Guilford Tech CC will organize a DL Coordinators' Roundtable. She will send a request for schools to contribute best practices in various areas of distance learning administration. To contribute to (or help organize) this event site, please contact Connie at cernigliac@gtcc.cc.nc.us.