

Shared Practices

How I Structured a Hybrid Class

by Ken Wheeler

I have a lot of students who travel a long way to go to class. I feel their pain when it comes to gas prices so I was interested when the Dean suggested we move some components of the Therapeutic Massage course to a hybrid format.

I said "interested" that is not "excited" or "gung ho". I am still very new to the teaching arena and trying to figure out how to do things in a classroom has been tough enough without starting a new format. I must admit my bachelor's in Healthcare Services was largely done online with the University of Phoenix so I was not a stranger to the concept. On the flip side, Therapeutic Massage is a lot of hands on work so it didn't seem to lend itself well to the online format.

One aspect did so I started there. The Ethics of Massage is a class I teach in the first part of the summer semester. This is a class where discussion is really important and there is little hands on. Ethics largely deals with gray areas where there can be two right answers. One of the hardest things I worked on in the classroom was getting discussion going. I love to learn in conversations but many "Millennial Students" mostly converse in text messages as I have learned. I came to realize this made online discussion format really work well. Some students who were the quietest in class became active, provocative discussion leaders in the discussion boards.

This is the basic format I set up for the online class:

Each week I posted a discussion board with 6 to 10 questions based on the chapter we were discussing. Every student was required log onto the discussion board a minimum of twice a week. In that time they must answer each of my initial questions, reply to each of their classmates at least once and submit a minimum of 20 substantive posts each week. I made "substantive" very clear as answers simply showing agreement would not count toward a grade. I also had to set a day early in the week when students had to have their first participation in so others could respond to it.

Lectures took several forms. The first being a power point presentation covering the material from the chapter. One idea that I am working on for next summer is to video tape a whole scenario of a massage therapist where they are in situations with ethical implications. This can be uploaded to the server for students to view from their computer. Then base the discussion questions on events. The first of which is "how many ethical issues did you see arise and describe them".



Tests are easy enough to post but students are likely to do them "open book" so I weight them lightly and require exams to be done here where they can be proctored.

Assignments: Each online weekly session included an assignment, usually a short paper on a specified subject. Sometimes it involved an interview with a practitioner on which they had to report.

In the classroom based part of the class, I would bring up issues that didn't get resolved or ones I felt were missed in the discussion board. It was interesting to see some of the students who rarely participated during most of the year come out of their shell as their online ideas were challenged.

The format worked so well, I have incorporated it into the fall semester class. I find much of the lecture time spent early in the book lends itself well to the online format. This involves the History of Massage, infection control and the like. I hope to see it open up those students who might have spent the whole year quiet. I also am using it to make sure the important information in the book is covered. I structure my discussion questions to hit specific items in the text and can usually tell when a student has missed it either because they didn't read it or they skipped over it. I can correct that by return questions and in some cases telling them "read it again".

The gas crunch was a good reason to kick me into starting this format and it has saved my students and I travel time and gas money. However, it has opened some other doors as well. I know everyone is participating and no one is hiding in the back of the class; students can surprise me with ideas I had not thought of; I can teach in a way that my tech savvy students relate better to. In all I really find it will help me run a better class. ■

"By stripping down an image to essential meaning, an artist can amplify that meaning...."
- Scott McCloud

Tutoring Program at Southwestern Community College Initiates Blackboard Site

by Marti Hunter, tutor coordinator

The CRLA (College Reading and Learning Association) certified tutoring program at Southwestern Community College has integrated the use of Blackboard to enable tutors to complete necessary contact information, serve as a means of communication, and to provide a venue for professional development through the posting of related readings, links, and information.



The idea for using Blackboard with the Tutoring Program developed from the need to simplify the tutors' daily contact information and to provide them with a system that they can access from their homes or campus. With tutoring services available in Jackson, Macon, and Swain counties, it has become necessary to streamline documentation and provide a means of communication among tutors and the tutor coordinator at Southwestern Community College's three county service area.

Tutors are able to pull up weekly announcements and contribute to discussion board threads related to tutoring issues. Tutoring contact hours which keep track of each individual tutor's time for each student can be documented on a daily basis. Group tutoring contact hours can be documented as well. The tutor may also add to the personal contact hour board any anecdotal notes or information they wish to record for their next tutoring session or notes they wish to send to the tutor coordinator.

While tutors at Southwestern Community College are still required to attend face-to-face tutor training, the addition of Blackboard has broadened the scope and ability for tutors to communicate with each other, document their services, and keep in contact with the tutor coordinator. We see this integration of technology as a way to improve efficiency for our tutoring program at Southwestern Community College and a way to continue to provide excellent services for our students. ■

Reflections of an Adjunct Instructor

by Laurie Hulbert

An adjunct instructor is a nontraditional job and I have grown to appreciate the advantages of being employed in a job that requires initiative, time management, and responsibility for role definition.

I am an adjunct instructor with the developmental studies department and I teach primarily Developmental Reading.

I have worked as an adjunct instructor for Southwestern Community College for two semesters. I had previously been employed as an adjunct faculty member at another regional community college. Last spring, I re-entered the teaching profession after a ten year interval.

I found that the fundamental objectives and purposes of my job had not changed. My primary responsibility still is to prepare and present lessons to my students that will facilitate maximum achievement of course competencies, expand subject knowledge base, and prepare students for subsequent college courses.

Though the fundamental objectives and purposes of my job have not changed, changes have occurred in how courses are designed and delivered. In addition to traditional teaching methodology, I am incorporating on-line teaching into my course curriculum. I have found that



students. The response to this combination by my students has been positive and I plan to expand my use of web enhanced teaching to include hybrid courses. I see the potential of on-line teaching and learning as limitless and Southwestern is progressively directing the use of this tool by the faculty and student community.

My experience at Southwestern has been positive. A variety of support services are available for adjunct instructors and the administration sets high standards for both full time and adjunct faculty members.

I am grateful to be a part of Southwestern's team of teachers. The developmental studies department is growing and formulating new ideas and approaches to better serve

web-enhanced courses allow me to better present course materials by offering a diverse learning format for

students. I am readily anticipating the 2008-2009 academic year and I also wish my students as well as all students at Southwestern a successful year. ■

If you would like to share one of your teaching practices with your colleagues, please submit a 300 word (or less) summary to Linda Venturo (lventuro@southwesterncc.edu).

STUDENTvoice

Course Introductions

by Chelsie Gilbert, RAD student

I have been a student at Southwestern Community College since 2006. Though I have thoroughly enjoyed my classes, I often wonder why more teachers don't post course introductions. I think that course introductions would be a wonderful asset to Southwestern's innovative collection.

Being a student, I think it would be wonderful to preview a course prior to signing up for a class. The course introductions that I have been able to use have been very beneficial. I thought it was very helpful, in that it gave information such as, what the teacher expects of the student, what type of material will be covered, teaching method, etc. Course introductions will give students guidelines to decide which class design would be best for them, based on their individual learning method.

How many students have attended their first day of class, read the syllabus, and then withdrawn? Teachers put so much energy into teaching and their students...this would be beneficial to the teachers as well. I believe that if course introductions were used more often, and students viewed them, there would be a clear and concise outline of the course. Therefore, students would know what to expect. In turn I think this would cause withdrawal rates to decrease significantly. ■



View the latest [introductory video](#) by Judy Abell

TechTalk

New Online Tools for Faculty

by Ryan Schwiebert, director of technology services

We have been working on quite a few changes in the computer center over the last several months. Though many of these changes may be considered behind the scene projects, there are a few useful projects directly related to education.

We have completed the first phase of the media server project, which is now capable of providing you with 4 gb of online storage space. This server is meant to hold a variety of web-related media including video, audio, pdf's, presentations, and more. There are no restrictions placed on the files which can be loaded to this server as long as

this server is web accessible, links to the media held on this server can be inserted into any other online utility such as Blackboard, e-mail, college web pages, and even online blogs. More improvements for the media server will be completed in the coming months; however, it is quite usable in its current state.

We have also completed a project to implement a college-wide blogging server for faculty and staff. As you may already know, blogs are useful for providing faculty with an easy way to provide others with access to a multitude of digital information. In addition to text based entries, this server can be used as an excellent basis for those interested in disseminating audio and video stored on the media server as rss podcast feeds. This frequently requested service has also been configured to work well with the college's existing authentication infrastructure to make it very easy to use.

There will be some additional information and training for these two online tools later in the Fall semester. If you would like to learn more about how to have either of these new services configured for your immediate use, please contact the computer center by sending an email to workorder@southwesterncc.edu or calling the help desk at extension 409. We will be more than happy to assist you. ■

blog: <http://blogs.southwesterncc.edu/ryans/>
Web site: <http://www.southwesterncc.edu/support/index.htm>



the material is not offensive or copyright restricted. Since

Blackboard

How do I manage the *Weighted Total Column* by *Category*?

What are the new functions in the *Grade Center*?

The new Grade Center offers more options and flexibility than the previous Gradebook tool. You can manage columns with drag 'n drop technology by clicking "Manage" then "Organize Grade Center." If students drop or withdraw from your class, you can make their accounts unavailable and then hide them from the Grade Center. Smart Views can separate multiple course sections within one Grade Center. Smart Views can also

help you identify low performing students throughout the semester (this will help you provide Early College and Concurrent Enrollment advisors with data more easily). You can also query data for quick printable reports. Student names can now be aligned next to particular columns saving you time on task (no more scrolling to the left and then to the right to view student names and grades/columns). ■



1. Each item in Grade Center calculations should have a **category** assigned.
2. After assigning categories, go to Weighted Total column and click on action link (two arrows pointing downward to right of title).
3. Choose **Modify Column** in this dropdown menu.
4. Scroll down to section #3.
5. Under **Categories to Select**, click on *your* categories and bring them over to the right box by clicking on arrow pointing right.
6. Type in *your* percentages for each category (should total to 100%).
7. Choose whether you want a **Running Total** (includes items with grades or attempts only) or all items included in total (zeroes added for ungraded and unattempted items).
8. **Submit.**

Grade Center tutorials: [video](#) / [online](#) / [pdf](#)

D.L. Committee Update

Fall 2008 Update

by Dennis Keough, director of distance learning, distance learning committee chair

As we settle into a new semester, it is worth mentioning some of the things your distance learning team has been working on over the last few months.

SCC is in the second year of a three-year contract with Blackboard Inc. to **host** our Blackboard services. Thankfully, our NCCC System Office has just wrapped-up negotiations with Bb Inc. on a three-year **licensing** contract. This means that you can expect to use Blackboard as your Course Management System for the foreseeable future.

On another note, you might see a few Tandberg ITV (Interactive TeleVision) units rolling around Oaks Hall. Our IT department is currently rewiring the campus for increased bandwidth capacity. Once installed, we'll be

able to deliver additional courses from Oaks Hall to our Macon, Swain, and Cherokee centers. We expect, also, to be delivering some ITV classes from our Early College office in Oaks Hall to Blue Ridge School in the spring.



Finally, we have just purchased a very good DVD/CD duplicator. This new DVD duplicator can quickly make copies (copyright laws do apply) for distribution to your classes. We can make eight duplicates at a time with this unit, making short work of your DVD duping requests. Contact Wayne Sutton (ext.321) should you have a need for this service.

That just about sums it up. Have a great semester. See y'all around campus. ■