Three-Year Development Plan

There is a three-year plan to develop Distance Education (DE) at the College of Marin. The plan has two intended outcomes: to increase our online course offerings and to improve our rate of student success in DE courses. College of Marin Strategic Plan 2009-2012, Strategic Objective 1.2.

Migrating from Blackboard to Moodle

According to Nick Chang, College of Marin most likely will be moving towards using Moodle as our distance education course management system (CMS) next fall after our license with Blackboard expires at the end of June 2011. Moodle requires no purchase or annual license fee and is much more user friendly according to faculty and students who have used it. Many colleges have migrated to this system with positive results.

There is a wonderful training opportunity for current distance education (DE) faculty and those interested in teaching DE in the future to become familiarized with Moodle. @ONE is a California Community College funded consortium that offers instructional technology training. They have scheduled two series of Moodle trainings beginning Nov. 1, 2010. The first will be an introductory series and the second will be a follow-up training for those who took the Introductory series. Please go to www.ccccon.org for more details under Upcoming Online Courses.

The College encourages your participation in this online training. The cost is $55 per series. You can get reimbursed by this simple process: 1) sign up and pay; 2) print out the receipt; 3) submit a Claim for Reimbursement form along with the receipt to Carol Scialli in the Office of the Vice President of Student Learning.

Lisa Valkenier, who teaches Anthropology at COM, writes that "perhaps it should be made clear that Moodle isn't just for DE but also for any web-enhanced course. If you want to post your syllabus, links, files, and video clips, or have a forum, online, you can use Moodle." While Valkenier has not taught a fully online or hybrid course yet, she is very enthusiastic about Moodle now that she finally found the time to attend a basic training session and started using it this semester. She not only uses Moodle to enhance her courses, but also to cut down on photocopying. Putting her materials into a Moodle site, she adds, is one way for her to respond to "all those student emails that ask: 'did I miss anything important in the last class?'"

Why not bookmark MoodleDocs now for future reference? This site is an example of a wiki where documentation is continually updated by an international community of Moodle users.
DE Committee

The Distance Education Committee, a subcommittee of the Academic Senate, issued the following recommendation on Oct. 11:

The Academic Senate’s Distance Education Committee recommends on the basis of its evaluation of pedagogical considerations that the College of Marin adopt Moodle as its sole learning management system as of June 2011, providing that resources are allocated for the level of IT support and faculty training commensurate with such a transition from Blackboard to Moodle and for continued maintenance of the chosen learning management system beyond the initial migration period.

Members of the AS DE Committee include: Maula Allen, Sandy Boyd, Ingrid Kelly, Alisa Klinger (Chair), Ira Lansing, John Marmysz, Luz Moreno, Kathleen Smyth

The Committee next meets on Oct. 28 and Dec. 2. It will meet regularly on the final Thursday of the month from 2:30-4 p.m. beginning in January 2011. Location TBA.

Please contact Ali Klinger (alisa.klinger@marin.edu), if you would like to attend.

Notes for COM Instructors

Course Information for DE Website

It is time to send Nancy Kutzer, Media Center Specialist, (415) 485-9645, nancy.kutzer@marin.edu, your course information, log on instructions, and wait list procedures for Spring 2011. It is most helpful to our students if you provide as much information as possible about your course beforehand, so students can determine if they are suitable candidates for online learning. Some students have the perception that DE courses will be easier, but it is our job to advise them about what successful DE students already know: online students need to be self-motivated with solid time management skills, they need to be able to communicate through writing, and they need access to reliable technology.

Spring 2011 Class Schedule

The Spring 2011 Class Schedule is in the works. Distance Ed courses will be listed by title, course number, and instructor’s name, as they were in the Fall 2010 Schedule. Students will be advised to go to the department sections for course descriptions and to go to the Distance Education web page for instructions about notifying their DE instructors of their registration. More detailed information will be available to prospective DE students at the Distance Education web page’s Online Courses section.

Spring 2011 Blackboard Shell Requests

Be sure to contact Steve Dodson to request a Blackboard shell for your courses. If you are teaching multiple sections of a course online, it is time to let Steve know whether you want the sections in one shell or multiple shells.

ADA Compliance Check Required

If you have not done so already, it is time to contact Alternative Media Specialist, Bobby Bradford (7551), to ensure that your course is compliant with the legal accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): bobby.brandon@marin.edu.

Enhanced Support Services for DE Students

Let your students know about the Distance Education Support Center (DESC).

It is especially relevant for students who want to be in command of their online learning, save time reading their textbooks, retain information better, improve their contributions to online discussion forums, and boost their grades in their distance education courses.

Faye Mueller provides assistance in person and by telephone, once students sign up online for online learning success help with:

- Reading
- Time management
- Test preparation

You can also phone Faye Mueller during the Phone Support hours listed at her website: 415-457-8811, ext. 7953; DESC Office LC-121; faye.mueller@marin.edu.

New Library Services for DE Students

The College of Marin Library is pleased to support our Distance Education students by providing remote reference services via email. John Erdmann is serving as the Distance Education Librarian this semester. You may contact John at jerdmann@mycom.marin.edu. He will strive to reply to all reference inquiries submitted between Sunday and Thursday within 24 hours.
Students are encouraged to consult with a reference librarian for advice in planning their research and to learn what library services might be useful to them. The reference librarian can answer short, factual questions, and provide guidance on research strategies and library resources. For assistance, please call the on-duty reference librarian at 485-9475. The Reference Desk is staffed from 9:00 to 9:00 Mondays–Thursdays, and Fridays from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Bb Training @ COM

Is there something about Blackboard that confuses or confounds you? If so, why not suggest a training topic? Ali Klinger offers Bb training on Friday afternoons throughout the semester. By keeping the training limited to a few people at a time, Ali can share a brief training module with the group, as well as provide some one-on-one customized support. Stay tuned to December’s DE@COM for details about Spring Flex Workshops.

To RSVP or suggest a training topic for a Friday training, please email alisa.klinger@marin.edu.

If you are new to Blackboard, please request a demo shell from Steve Dodson (7473) before attending trainings, and be sure to bring your Blackboard log on information with you: steve.dodson@marin.edu.

Migrating to Moodle

Friday, November 12, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Please RSVP for location.

During this session, you can preview some courses in Moodle, discovering how lessons, assignments, assessments, and communication function in Moodle. Ali Klinger will share some of what she knows about Moodle and about migration, providing you with ideas about what you can do now to best prepare your online courses for next academic year. Whether you can attend or not, it is never too early to start saving your documents from Blackboard to your own computer or flash drive. Organize your materials by topic or by week of instruction, so they will be easy to track and upload as needed. If you use announcements, emails, and discussion posts in Bb to communicate with your students, be sure to save those, too, so that you can recycle them. Ali will share some tips about how to most easily preserve your keystrokes, and she will provide or find answers to your questions about Moodle.

Seeking More Comprehensive Training?

- "The @ONE Project makes it easy for California Community College faculty and staff to learn about technology that will enhance student learning and success. @ONE's programs provide training, online resources and research for free — or at a very low cost — thanks to funding from the California Community College Chancellor's Office Telecommunication and Technology Infrastructure Program (TTIP)"

- Upcoming Desktop Seminars and Online Courses

Moodle Training

Joan Van Duzer is currently teaching instructors how to use Moodle in a series of courses offered by @ONE. Consider registering for Joan’s upcoming introductory or advanced class to learn how Moodle works. Ali Klinger takes these courses so that she can work with a COM cohort, as needed. The college encourages your participation in this online training. The cost is $55 per series. You can get reimbursed by this simple process: 1) sign up and pay; 2) print out the receipt; 3) submit a Claim for Reimbursement form along with the receipt to Carol Scialli in the Office of the Vice President of Student Learning.

Introduction to Teaching with Moodle with Joan Van Duzer

Mon. 11/01/2010 – 8:00am – Fri. 12/05/2010 – 5:00pm (Pacific Time)

"Are you ready to become a Moodier? Moodle is an easy-to-use, open source, course management system for online, hybrid, or face-to-face classes. In this course you'll learn how to enter a Moodle course shell and organize and present content—including graphics—all without needing to know HTML! You'll discover handy tools for site, course, and student management functions, as well as tools for creating quizzes, assignments with due dates, grades, and interactive forums. You'll not only finish the course with a working knowledge of Moodle, you'll also walk away with the foundation for your own online course."

More about Moodle with Joan Van Duzer

Mon. 11/01/2010 – 8:00am – Fri. 12/03/2010 – 5:00pm (Pacific Time)

"The 'Introduction to Teaching with Moodle' course introduced a variety of Moodle tools. However, there is
much more to this flexible open source program! Are you curious about what else is "out there?" Are you ready to learn 'More About Moodle'? This is a hands-on course where students learn more about Moodle's capabilities in a highly interactive environment.

Conference & Publication Calls

- Next Generation Learning Challenges - "Do you have a passionate belief in the need to improve college readiness and completion in the United States? Do you see the possibilities for how technology can help improve student success and transform learning? Or, perhaps, you are already using technology to further learning and increase student success?"

- Academic Exchange Quarterly, independent double-blind-peer-reviewed print journal, welcomes submissions that contribute to the effective instruction and learning regardless of level or subject.

- Soaring To New Heights Computer Using Educators, Nov. 5-6, 2010, Napa Valley.

- The MERLOT Journal of Online Learning and Teaching (JOLT) is now seeking manuscripts for its Spring 2011 issue. To be considered, manuscripts must be submitted by Nov. 15, 2010.


- "CUE and TechED Combine, Call For Presentations" by Sandoval Chagoya.

- 27th Annual Conference on Distance Teaching & Learning: Aug. 3-5, 2011. Call for Proposals: The CFP brochure and online proposal process will be available in mid-November. Check for more information about presentation formats, etc. in a few weeks.

Must Read


- Emerging Technologies in Distance Education (Issues in Distance Education)

- "Using Web Video to Fine-Tune Student Performance," by Travis Kaya.

- "Cell Phone: Friend or Foe of Learning?"


- "Title 5 Regulations on Distance Education."

- "Guidelines for Good Practice: Effective Instructor-Student Contact in Distance Learning," The academic Senate for the California Community Colleges, Adopted Spring 1999.


Must Follow

- "Moodle has a large and diverse user community with over 1012098 registered users on this Moodle site alone, speaking over 78 languages in 211 countries."

- Pasadena City College Distance Education Department Blog, a place to learn and share knowledge about developing exceptional online courses for students.


- Building on the innovation and commitment of today's educators, Next Generation Learning Challenges addresses questions that transcend secondary and postsecondary education.

Must See

- freetech4teachers.com

- "RSA Animate – Changing Education Paradigms"

- Chemistry Art

Got Something to Share?

Send best practices, suggestions, and web links for inclusion in DE@COM to alisa.klinger@marin.edu
Three-Year Development Plan

There is a three-year plan to develop Distance Education (DE) at the College of Marin. The plan has two intended outcomes: to increase our online course offerings and to improve our rate of student success in DE courses. *College of Marin Strategic Plan 2009-2012; Strategic Objective 1.2.*

Notes for COM Instructors

If you would like to use the Blackboard platform for the Fall 2010 semester, please let Steve Dodson (7473) know ASAP: steve.dodson@marin.edu

If you have not done so already, it is time to contact Alternative Media Specialist, Bobby Bradford (7551), to ensure that your course is compliant with the legal accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): bobby.bradford@marin.edu

Click Clack from COM DE Students

Bryan Loretz, once skeptical about a class with no physical classroom, confesses that he now "feels like a DE pro!"

Bb Training @ COM

Ali Klinger offers Bb training on Friday afternoons throughout the semester.

Beyond Blackboard

COM’s license with Blackboard expires at the end of the Spring 2011 semester, so what comes next is currently under consideration.

Online Student Authentication

Summarizes key points of the current Higher Education Opportunity Act regarding online student authentication.

Must Follow and See

Valuable sites to check out for the latest on DE.

Conference Calls

- Soaring To New Heights, Computer Using Educators, Nov. 5–6, 2010, Napa Valley

Call for Papers

- The MERLOT *Journal of Online Learning and Teaching (JOLT)* is now seeking manuscripts for its Spring 2011 issue. To be considered, manuscripts must be submitted by Nov. 15, 2010.
Bb Training @ COM

Is there something about Blackboard that confuses or confounds you? If so, why not suggest a training topic? Ali Klinger offers Bb trainings on Friday afternoons throughout the semester. By keeping the trainings limited to a few people at a time, Ali can share a brief training module with the group, as well as provide some one-on-one customized support. Stay tuned to October's DE@COM for details about trainings on October 8, 22, and 29 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. in the Information Literacy Lab - COM Library.

To suggest a training topic or to RSVP for a Friday training, please email alisa.klinger@marin.edu. If you are new to Blackboard, please request a demo shell from Steve Dodson (7473) before attending trainings, and be sure to bring your Blackboard log on information with you: steve.dodson@marin.edu

Blackboard for Beginners: Re-FLEX

Friday, September 10, from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. in the Information Literacy Lab - COM Library

Dr. Ali Klinger, Online Learning Faculty Resource Instructor, facilitates a workshop to introduce Blackboard’s course management system to instructors who have had no experience teaching online, but who are interested in pursuing distance education or adding an online component to their face-to-face classes. Participants will tour an existing online course to discover its instructional and communication features, as well as develop their own mini-courses during the workshop.

Because this is an introductory workshop for beginners, it is not recommended for instructors who have experience teaching online or hybrid courses unless they wish to shadow or assist others new to online instruction. This repeat training is for those who missed the Fall FLEX Workshop and for those who attended but want a repeat.

Registration RSVP: alisa.klinger@marin.edu Please indicate in your RSVP if you have a Blackboard account with username and password. If you do not, please request one from Steve Dodson (7473) before September 8: steve.dodson@marin.edu

Teaching Online Q & A

Friday, September 24, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. in the Information Literacy Lab - COM Library

This session is dedicated to responding to specific questions about online instruction regardless of CMS (course management system). Come prepared with your questions about existing courses or courses you might want to create. We will discuss how to conceive and design a social, participatory online course, focusing particularly on online teaching rather than on technology.

Fostering Social Presence

Friday, October 1, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. in the Information Literacy Lab - COM Library

This session focuses on taking the distance out of distance ed, by creating the kinds of social presence in your online courses that foster student engagement and success regardless of your CMS (course management system).

Seeking More Comprehensive Training?

• Webinar: "Developmental Students: Using Hybrid Coursework to Improve Electronic Literacy," recording available. Please contact Susan Andrien (susan.andrien@marin.edu) or Ali Klinger (alisa.klinger@marin.edu) for details.

• "The @ONE Project makes it easy for California Community College faculty and staff to learn about technology that will enhance student learning and success. @ONE's programs provide training, online resources and research for free – or at a very low cost – thanks to funding from the California Community College Chancellor's Office Telecommunication and Technology Infrastructure Program (TTIP)"

• Upcoming Desktop Seminars and Online Courses
Beyond Blackboard

COM's license with Blackboard expires at the end of the Spring 2011 semester, so what comes next is currently under consideration. Many community colleges and universities, including City College of San Francisco, Peralta Community College, Chaffey College, Dominican University, Sonoma State University, and Humboldt State University, have recently migrated from Blackboard to Moodle because of its ease of use and affordability. You can learn more about Moodle here.

You might also be interested in Kathy Munoz and Joan Van Duzer's 2005 publication, "Blackboard vs. Moodle: A Comparison of Satisfaction with Online Teaching and Learning Tools." Joan Van Duzer is currently teaching instructors how to use Moodle in a series of courses offered by @ONE. Since it is quite likely that COM will migrate to Moodle, consider registering for Joan's upcoming introductory class to learn how Moodle works. Ali Klinger is already registered in the course, so she can work with a COM cohort, as needed. The Vice President of Student Learning, Nick Chang, is committed to funding this training. Be sure to keep your registration confirmation and payment receipt for reimbursement of the $55 fee.

Introduction to Teaching with Moodle with Joan Van Duzer

Mon. 10/04/2010 – 8:00 a.m. – Fri. 10/29/2010 – 5:00 p.m. (Pacific Time)

"Are you ready to become a Moodler? Moodle is an easy-to-use, open source, course management system for online, hybrid, or face-to-face classes. In this course you'll learn how to enter a Moodle course shell and organize and present content—including graphics—all without needing to know HTML! You'll discover handy tools for site, course, and student management functions, as well as tools for creating quizzes, assignments with due dates, grades, and interactive forums. You'll not only finish the course with a working knowledge of Moodle, you'll also walk away with the foundation for your own online course."

Online Student Authentication

Student authentication is relevant to both face-to-face and online instruction, ensuring that instructors know who is taking their courses from start to finish. As distance educators, we need to consider issues of academic integrity and compliance with federal rules when developing and offering online courses.

Below is a summary of the most current interpretation of the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) regarding authenticating the identity of online students from "August 2010- Student Authentication, Academic Integrity, and Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008." Additional reference: WCET

- Institutions that offer online courses to students are presently in compliance with the HEOA if they have, at a minimum, a pass code/password system in place as means to authenticate students, or proctored exams, or technologies and practices which are effective in verifying student identification.
- As new identification technologies are developed and become more sophisticated, less expensive and more mainstream, accrediting agencies or associations and institutions will consider their use in the future and we can assume that institutions will be adopting these measures accordingly.
- Institutions must protect student privacy as part of the authentication process and if there are extra fees associated with this as part of the online course, students need to be made aware of this prior to enrollment.

The issue of student authentication is both pedagogical and technological, underscoring the importance of academic integrity online and off. For "Best Practice Strategies to Promote Academic Integrity In Online Education" (Version 2.0, June 2009), see WICHE.

Technology: Our MyCom Portal is password protected, as is our Blackboard learning management system.
Pedagogy: Instructors use multiple measures to ensure student authentication, including proctored exams, mandatory in-person meetings, reliance on written assignments and threaded discussions, group work, randomized question assessments, timed tests, test banks, interactive assignments and assessments, frequent and varied assessments rather than high stakes assessments, and so forth. Semester-to-semester modifications also discourage cheating. COM's Student Conduct Policy, course communication guidelines, statements about academic integrity and dishonesty, and collaborative honor codes are some of the ways that online instructors discourage cheating.

COM's "Student Conduct Policy" (2010-2011 Catalog, page 38) advises students against "cheating, plagiarism (including plagiarism in a student publication), or engaging in other academic dishonesty." Even still, it is a best practice for online educators to include specific guidelines for academic integrity and appropriate student conduct in their course syllabi.

Best Practices – Communication Guidelines for Distance Etiquette

Here is a sample “Communication Guidelines” statement from Alisa Klinger’s recent “Blackboard for Beginners” FLEX Workshop at COM.

Participation in discussions, chats, and email are mandatory in this class, enabling you to score points for your contributions and for reading the contributions made by your classmates. You are expected to read all the posts in a discussion, just as you would hear all the students’ voices in a face-to-face class. Since the goal of our discussions is an exchange of ideas in a learning community, I ask you to write posts that reflect your most intelligent and mature self, respond to questions, show a knowledge of the topic, provide evidence of critical reading and critical thinking, reveal planning and forethought, and demonstrate an understanding of the course materials. This is all to say, our discussions are not off the proverbial cuff. Whatever you post in Blackboard can also easily live on long past this course. One of the cardinal rules of virtual reality is do not post anything that you would not want a future employer or your mother to see. So be sure to take the time to contemplate and compose, as well as to revise and proofread. Discussions are the crux of our learning community, allowing for an exchange of ideas, interpretations, and insights. Our discussions, moreover, are how we combat the isolation of the distance education student (and instructor). So post early and post often; your grade depends on it.

In the Discussions and Email forums, you should use Standard English, prose that is grammatically correct, and spelling that has been checked. (Click on the HTML editor for the spellchecker or compose in a word processing document and cut and paste into the Discussions forum if you prefer.) Please refrain from using abbreviations and contractions (text-speak), since this is neither a social networking forum nor a telephone. I imagine it goes without saying, but know that you must post your own words rather than rely on someone else to post for you or groom your work for you.

When you are in the chat area, the environment is much more casual and forgiving of spelling and typos, so you should just keyboard as fast as you can during a session. Keep in mind that I do receive transcripts of your chat discussions, so you always want to present your best self to others in the course and to your instructor.

Because this is an online environment and we cannot read facial or body cues, the written word often comes across harsher than we expect. Many of you have probably already formed all kinds of opinions or made assumptions about me just based on the way I sound in my course materials: task master or drill sergeant perhaps? (Would it help to know that I am only 5 feet, 2 inches tall, a former gymnast, a mother of a 11-year-old daughter, and a Ben and Jerry's Cherry Garcia Low Fat FroYo enthusiast?) Try to be especially sensitive to your peers' feelings when you are responding to a question or offering feedback. A few kind or encouraging words are almost always well received and appreciated.
Although I will read all the Discussions postings, I will only respond with comments or advice as appropriate. Sometimes, my responses will be private; so while you may not realize it, I am sending my responses to students through email to discuss issues that are not for the whole class to read.

Issues of private and public are sometimes difficult to sort out in Cyberspace. So here are three important points. First, never post anything online that you would not want your mother, grandmother, and future employer to read. Second, do not spam the class. In other words, never send an email to more than 5 students at once in Blackboard. If you have anything that needs to go to more than 5 students, put your post in the discussions area rather than email. (It is a violation of this course’s academic code of conduct to send spam.) Finally, never give out your personal whereabouts and telephone number in the discussions area to the whole class. This is an issue of personal safety. Your telephone number is private. You can email it to whomever you want, but it is not something you should tell the whole class. Similarly, if you are going to the Library and you want to meet others in the class, it is not a good idea to tell the entire class when and where. Think about your personal safety. A better way to accomplish your study goals is to post in the discussions area, asking if anyone is interested in studying together or working on an assignment together. Once you get responses, then move the discussion to email to the particular people with whom you are comfortable sharing information about your whereabouts or your contact information. If you wish to discuss these Guidelines with me, do feel free to email me. COM’s “Student Conduct Policy” is printed in the 2010-2011 Catalog, page 38.

Must Follow

- “California Community Colleges End Controversial Deal With Kaplan U.,” by Josh Keller.
- “Academic Resources and Universal Design,” by George H. Williams.
- The Beloit College Mindset List “provides a look at the cultural touchstones that shape the lives of students entering college this fall.”
- “Justice Department Weighs Putting Web Sites Under Disability Rules,” by Marc Parry.
- “Blinding Technology of Online Learning,” by Steve Kolowich.
- “Movie Clips and Copyright,” by Steve Kolowich.
- “A Blended Librarian Talks Information Literacy,” by Jennifer Howard.
- “The Open, Social, Participatory Future of Online Learning,” by Marc Parry.
- “Texas Students Could Be Required to Seek Off-Campus Learning Options,” by Marc Parry.

Must See

- “Video: Voices From the Front Lines of Online Learning,” by Marc Parry.
- Bill Gates Predicts Technology Will Make ‘Place-Based’ Colleges Less Important in 5 Years,” by Jeff Young.
- Visual Thesaurus
- Animator vs. Animation
- Social Media Revolution
- A Choir As Big As The Internet
- Today in Literature
- Stem Cell Education Portal
- The Futures Channel Educational Videos and Activities
- New Spice: Study Like a Scholar, Scholar
- @wwoodworth | Old Spice
- Classical Typewriter Symphony

Got Something to Share?
Send best practices, suggestions, and web links for inclusion in DE@COM to alisa.klinger@marin.edu