Home

What's New

Search

Contacts

Feedback

Colleges/ Map

NCCCS Directory

Calendar

Catalog

Links

Creating a Virtual Learning Community

Fall 2001 Volume 3, Issue 1

61 Online Courses Available to NC Community Colleges

Fifty-one more Virtual Learning Community courses are ready, joining ten created last year. All are available for download and use by faculty at colleges in good standing with terms of the VLC Cooperative Agreement. Courses include all those needed to offer online AAS degrees in Information Systems or Business Administration.

Courses include a syllabus, instructional objectives, lecture notes, study guides, a variety of assignments, Internet links, and help documents for both instructors and online students. On the local server, instructor and student accounts must be loaded into the course, and the instructor must insert due dates and point values for assignments. Other elements are in place, but any part of the course can be customized. Materials can be used to teach online or support a face-to-face course.

The available courses include:

ACA 111 College Student Success
ACC 120 Principles of Accounting I
ACC 121 Principles of Accounting II
ACC 150 Computerized General Ledger
ART 111 Art Appreciation
BUS 110 Introduction to Business
BUS 115 Business Law I
BUS 116 Business Law II
BUS 121 Business Math
BUS 137 Principles of Management
BUS 153 Human Resource Management
BUS 225 Business Finance
BUS 230 Small Business Management
BUS 238 Integrated Management
BUS 239 Business Applications Seminar
BUS 260 Business Communications
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
COM 110 Introduction to Communication
CSC 134 C++ Programming
CSC 139 Visual Basic Programming
CSC 148 JAVA 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
HUM 110 Technology & Society
HUM 115 Critical Thinking
LEX 110 Introduction to Paralegal Study
MAT 115 Mathematical Models
MAT 151 Statistics
MAT 161 College Algebra
MED 121 Medical Terminology I
MED 122 Medical Terminology II
MKT 120 Principles of Marketing
MKT 123 Fundamentals of Selling
MKT 220 Advertising & Sales Promotion
MUS 110 Music Appreciation
NET 110 Data Communications/Networking
OST 136 Word Processing
OST 236 Advanced Word Processing
POL 120 American Government
PSY 150 General Psychology
SOC 210 Introduction to Sociology

To preview any of the courses listed above, visit http://bb.ncccs.cc.nc.us:1677. Click on "Login" or "Course Catalog" then on the resulting screen, click "Preview." Select any course and click "Preview" next to the name of that course. If you want to use a course, your local Blackboard administrator can download and set it up.

Thank You!

We wish to recognize the coordinators, editors, and developers who worked on this year's courses. Please join us in relaying thanks to the following. They have done a good deed for North Carolina community colleges.

Kaye Acton Alamance CC
Sarah Altman Southwestern CC
Sharon Andrews Nash CC
Pat Baldwin Pitt CC
Ann Behar Vance-Granville CC
Nolan Belk Wilkes CC
Jeff Benfield Mitchell CC
Tom Beverage Coastal Carolina CC
Fred Bisel Craven CC

Elizabeth Black Fayetteville Tech CC
Joyce Boone Halifax CC
Patrice Brazell Craven CC
Luann Brown Coastal Carolina CC
Star Brown Western Piedmont CC
Joy Bruce Gaston College
Joe Brum Fayetteville Tech CC
Joe Bryant Halifax CC
Michele Burleson McDowell Tech CC
Vickie Campbell Cape Fear CC
Katie Canty Cape Fear CC
Wanda Card Pitt CC
Dorothy Cattle Forsyth Tech CC
Jewel Cherry Forsyth Tech CC
Savannah Clay Central Piedmont CC
Betty Cochran Beaufort County CC
Mary Emily Cooke Surry CC
Bill Copeland Fayetteville Tech CC
Abbie Covington Richmond CC
Kathy Crump Catawba Valley CC
Ruth Daniel Blue Ridge CC
Matilda Davis Richmond CC
Polly Decker Brunswick CC
Paul Dellinger Western Piedmont CC
Ken Digby Fayetteville Tech CC
Mary Dixon Sandhills CC
Michael Drew Nash CC
Lisa Duncan Central Carolina CC
Bambi Edwards Craven CC
Paul Edwards Blue Ridge CC
Gail Elmore Mitchell CC
Bob Ericksen Craven CC
Duane Everhart Wayne CC
Cathy Farabow Wilson Tech CC
Tina Farmer Pitt CC
Katie Fields Guilford Tech CC
Brenda Fowler Alamance CC
Kelly Fowler Gaston College
Leatrice Freer Pitt CC
Cheryl Fries Guilford Tech CC
Merrill Gordon Forsyth Tech CC
Stan Grady Forsyth Tech CC
Glenda Greene Rowan-Cabarrus CC
Jim Hale Vance-Granville CC
Annette Hall Forsyth Tech CC
Kathy Hall Alamance CC
Valerie Hampson Sandhills CC
Mary Harbison Wake Tech CC
Rosanna Hartley Western Piedmont CC
Annette Hawkins Wayne CC
Paul Hayes Coastal Carolina CC
Karen Hicks Nash CC
James Hobbs Alamance CC
Warren Hodges Forsyth Tech CC
Bob Husson Craven CC
Diane Innes Sandhills CC
Lynn Judy Carteret CC
KC Irwin Catawba Valley CC
Connie Ivey Robeson CC
Cathy Johnson Alamance CC
Rebecca Jones Bladen CC
Robert Jones Fayetteville Tech CC
Gerry Kearns Forsyth Tech CC
Patricia Kennedy Central Piedmont CC
Lanita Kirby Rowan-Cabarrus CC
Bill Kirchman Fayetteville Tech CC
Vicky Koonce Craven CC
Jennifer Labosky Davidson County CC
Rick Lewis Sandhills CC
Cindy Luttrell Sandhills CC
Steve Lympany Central Carolina CC
Faye Maclaga Wilson Tech CC
Lana Mason Wayne CC

Brenda Mattison Robeson CC
David McGee Lenoir CC
Leslie McKesson Western Piedmont CC
Cynthia McKoy Bladen CC
Russ Meade Catawba Valley CC
Spence Mehl Coastal Carolina CC
Beth Mitchell Mayland CC
Margaret Moore Coastal Carolina CC
Barbara Morrison Bladen CC
Janet Palmer Caldwell CC
Ruth Parker Rowan-Cabarrus CC
Kate Parks Pitt CC
Chris Pearce Forsyth Tech CC
Annelle Pegg Catawba Valley CC
Walt Person Central Carolina CC
Tenette Petelinkar Robeson CC
Harry Phillips Central Piedmont CC
Jim Pleszewski Rowan-Cabarrus CC
Debra Pressley Blue Ridge CC
Patsy Pridgen Nash CC
Walter Purvis Coastal Carolina CC
Mike Randleman Gaston College
Dan Reavis Guilford Tech CC
Kristin Redfield Forsyth Tech CC
Phil Reid Cleveland CC
Gloria Rembert Mitchell CC
Wendy Riemenschneider Sandhills CC
Nancy Risch Caldwell CC
Wilborn Rives Surry CC
Rita Rogers Halifax CC
David Ross Carteret CC
Keith Ross Wilson Tech CC
Ann Russell Bladen CC
Paula Schlesinger Mayland CC
Elaine Seeman Pitt CC
Sheila Shelton Surry CC
Joe Sherrill Martin CC
Reeves Shulstad Forsyth Tech CC
Witold Sieradzan Wake Tech CC
Judy Snipes Alamance CC
Jeanette Staley Catawba Valley CC
Bonni Staples Central Piedmont CC
Marisa Sudano Isothermal CC
Bill Sypawka Pitt CC
Linda Talbott Southwestern CC
Jim Tart Vance-Granville CC
David Trask Guilford Tech CC
Valeria Truitt Craven CC
Larue Ulshafer Piedmont CC
Brian Underwood Catawba Valley CC
Dan Walker Craven CC
Ken Wallace Craven CC
Barbara Walls Guilford Tech CC
Barbara Watkins Wake Tech CC
Nick Way Guilford Tech CC
Trish Welfare Sampson CC
Charlene West Durham Tech CC
Pat West Central Piedmont CC
John Wester Richmond CC
Jim Wheeler Vance-Granville CC
Mark Wheeler Guilford Tech CC
David Whisenant Gaston College
Deborah Wilson Sandhills CC
Kathy Wood Catawba Valley CC

2001-2002 Course Development Plans Announced

The Community is not stopping with 61 courses! Preparations are well under way to develop 50 more courses and revise most of the existing courses in 2001-2002. These new courses will make it possible for every college in the System to offer an AA college transfer degree online.

Six centers have been chosen to lead development. Although selection and configuration of courses may change based on availability of developers, initial plans are for the following:

Center 1--Business and Emergency Management Technologies
Central Piedmont CC
Coordinator Savannah Clay

ACC 140 Payroll Accounting
ACC 225 Cost Accounting
ECM 168 Electronic Business
EMS 235 EMS Management
FIP 152 Fire Protection Law
HEA 110 Personal Health & Wellness
INT 110 International Business
Business Editing Team

Center 2—Applied Math, Science, and Computer Technologies
Alamance CC
Coordinator Cathy Johnson

BIO 111 General Biology I
BIO 112 General Biology II
CHM 131 Introduction to Chemistry
CIS 220 Spreadsheets II
CSC 160 Introduction to Internet Programming
ITN 140 Web Development Tools
MAT 140 Survey of Mathematics
Computers Editing Team

Center 3--Criminal Justice, Paralegal, and Industrial Technology
Guilford Technical CC
Coordinator Connie Cerniglia

BPR 111 Blueprint Reading
CJC 112 Criminology
CJC 131 Criminal Law
CJC 141 Corrections
ISC 112 Industrial Safety
LEX 120 Legal Research Writing I
LEX 130 Civil Injuries
LEX 210 Real Property I
MNT 111 Maintenance Practices
Social Science Editing Team

Center 4--Early Childhood Education and Human Services Technology
Forsyth Technical CC
Coordinator Dorothy Cattle

COM 120 Interpersonal Communication
EDU 131 Child, Family, and Community
EDU 144 Child Development I
EDU 145 Child Development II
EDU 280 Literacy Experiences
HSE 110 Intro to Human Services Technology
HSE 210 Human Services Issues
PSY 241 Developmental Psychology
SOC 213 Sociology of the Family

Center 5--Health and Office Systems Technologies
Pitt CC
Coordinator Phyllis Broughton

CUL 110 Sanitation & Safety
HIT 110 Health Information Orientation
HIT 112 Health Law & Ethics
MED 118 Medical Law & Ethics
NUT 110 Nutrition
OST 134 Text Entry & Formatting
OST 164 Text Editing Applications
OST 184 Records Management

Center 6--Arts and Humanities
Fayetteville Tech CC
Coordinator Cheryl Thomas

ANT 210 General Anthropology
ART 114 Art History Survey I
ENG 231 American Literature I
ENG 261 World Literature I
HIS 131 American History I
HIS 132 American History II
HUM 150 American Women's Studies
PHI 240 Introduction to Ethics
PSY 281 Abnormal Psychology
REL 110 World Religions
SPA 111 Elementary Spanish I
Arts and Humanities Editing Team

Development teams of two to four faculty members are forming now through nominations from colleges. Teams have two face-to-face meetings at their development center, but do the bulk of work online.

Courses are carefully correlated to the Common Course Library description and educational objectives written by the teams. A template is used to both ease development and assure baseline quality in all courses. One important goal is to make courses easily adaptable by potential instructors.

Four editing teams will examine the courses previously developed in business, arts and humanities, social sciences, and computers. They will revise and improve these courses.

If you have a question, would like to participate but were missed in the nomination process, or want to use the Community template to build a course that did not make this year's list, contact Neil Hollands at hollandsn@ncccs.cc.nc.us.

Online Instructor Training Course Coming Soon

A Blackboard-based course in how to provide high quality online instruction will be available for instructors by November 15. The course will be designed so that it can be led by an experienced online instructor or taken as a self-paced tutorial. The course will be useful for both novice and experienced online instructors, although some experience with Blackboard will be assumed.

Course materials are being collected from a variety of sources. Topics include how to structure a course site, how to interact successfully with students, how to construct assignments well-suited for the

online environment, and how to reduce the time required to teach online. The use of online materials to support face-to-face courses will also be covered. The course will include assignments so that new skills can be practiced.

Durham Tech CC Studies Online Class Size

by Karen McPhaul, Durham Technical CC

What is the appropriate number of students for an online class? Should an online class have more, the same number, or fewer students than an on-campus class? These are questions that colleges are trying to answer as student demand for online courses grows. These questions can be controversial because they are closely tied to other important issues such as the quality of online classes and faculty workload.

In spring 2001, an informal survey of 16 North Carolina community colleges revealed that all were grappling with the question of online class size. The reported maximum enrollment ranged from 8 to 40 students. Half of the colleges (eight) reported that they do not impose a single cap on all online courses. At these colleges, maximums vary depending on factors such as the type of course, department offering the course, or in some cases, faculty preference.

The remaining eight colleges have established one cap for all online classes, usually either 20 or 25 students. Most of the colleges report that caps for online courses are lower than those of comparable on-campus classes. Many colleges also apply a lower cap the first time an instructor teaches online—usually 10 to 15 students.

Eight colleges were evaluating current caps and writing or revising related policies. Groups such as faculty councils and distance learning com-mites were studying the issue. Some indicated that they expected to lower the maximums for online classes.

Distance learning literature offers advice but no exact formula for defining reasonable caps. An article in the August 1998 issue of Syllabus recommends capping classes for first-time online instructors at 10-14 students. The same article warns, "habits and strategies of teaching and learning that work well with small groups do not scale up very well." Transitioning to teach more students may require significant changes in methodology for the instructor.

An extensive study to inform distance learning policy is the report of the University of Illinois seminar "Teaching at an Internet Distance" http://www.vpaa.uillinois.edu/tid/report/toc.html. Sixteen UI faculty members spent one year studying the pedagogy of online learning and concluded that "because high quality online teaching is time and labor intensive, it is not likely to be the income source envisioned by some administrators. Teaching the same number of students online at the same level of quality as in the classroom requires more time and money."

Neither the survey of NC community colleges nor the literature on distance learning provides an easy answer or exact formula for determining the "right" size for an online class. But they do provide some important points for educators and administrators to consider as they formulate—and revise—distance learning policies.

First Ten Community Courses Receiving Heavy Use

A survey shows that use of the first ten Virtual Learning Community courses and course tem-plate is widespread in North Carolina community colleges. Of 52 responding colleges, 50 are using at least one of the courses. In all, colleges are offering or preparing to offer 216 courses based on the first ten titles and on-line template. That’s an average use of over four courses out of ten for each reporting college.

USE OF THE FIRST 10 VLC COURSES

COURSE	**COLLEGES USING**
ART 111	19
BUS 110	20
CIS 110	21
CIS 120	17
CIS 172	20
ECO 251	12
ENG 111	26
HIS 121	16
PSY 150	24
SOC 210	23
Online Course Template	18
TOTAL USES	**216**

The courses have been especially useful for colleges that were slower to adopt online learning, allowing them to catch up by quickly increasing available online offerings.

Although statistics on use of the 51 courses developed in 2000-2001 will not be complete for another year, initial demand and download of these courses has also been heavy.

Techniques for Encouraging Enthusiasm in Online Learners

Without care, online students succumb to two related problems: isolation and apathy. Working alone, students can become confused and frustrated, feeling they don't have the resources to succeed. When this happens, they drop courses and avoid future online opportunities.

In other cases, students stay in the course, but end up grinding unhappily through repetitive, uninteresting assignments. They emerge with a substandard education and a negative attitude toward both online learning and the subject.

The solution to these problems is found in an active, enthusiastic approach to online education that emphasizes communication among all of a class's members. Online educators and distance learning literature suggest seven answers.

1. Show optimism and personality in email and course materials.

The format and length of messages can make email feel abrupt and joyless to readers. Instructors must overcome this, or students will avoid communication. Try to convey excitement about the subject matter, students, and practice of on-line learning in messages to the class.

Techniques for raising the energy level in email include using more punctuation and "emoticons" (symbols like happy faces made with type figures.) Describe your mood at the start of messages. Try not to be "all business." At the start of a new course or unit, let students know why the content is important or interesting.

Finally, let students know a little about you. Students become more dedicated to a course as they grow to appreciate the instructor as a per-son, so show some personality in your writing.

2. Raise interest with thought-provoking issues.

Every subject has controversies, and forming opinions about these is often the way that learners become engaged in the subject. When instructors encourage debate and discussion about these issues without taking sides, they motivate student interest.

What issues face professionals working in this field? What topics are debated in academic circles? What are some of the common problems and proposed solutions? Even when controversies aren't central to the curriculum of the particular course, skilled instructors use them to engage students.

3. Use short extra-credit questions to engage students in online reading.

Online courses require a great deal of reading to replace the spoken communication of the class-room. Reading in this setting is not optional. Without it, students cannot complete the course.

To motivate reading, many top online instructors give students extra-credit questions associated with readings. These focus student attention on important concepts and encourage completion of the reading. Submitting an answer requires an email exchange with the instructor, encouraging students to ask follow-up questions.

4. Inject humor into course materials.

Learning at a distance and working with computers can be frustrating. A few laughs will help students cope and keep them logging into the course. Free cartoon clip art is readily available on the Internet and easy to paste into course materials. Humorous anecdotes, especially from the instructor's own experience, will lighten the course and increase your approachability.

The Internet is also a good source of subject-related humor. Try a web search for humor appropriate to the curriculum area. Here are two education humor sites to get you started:

Technology and education related humor
http://www.minot.com/~nansen/humor/

School humor home page
http://www.esuhsd.org/humor/

5. Get proactive in communicating with students.

A common mistake is to assume that everything is going well when students are quiet. Good on-line instructors send the first message, not just the reply. Send email when:

⇒ a student hasn't contacted you yet

⇒ a student is late turning in an assignment

⇒ students are nearing an important hurdle

⇒ you have some helpful advice

⇒ a student asks a good question that others are likely to ask as well

⇒ the class seems too quiet

This might sound like a great deal of work, but proactive communication actually prevents problems that take more time later on.

6. Involve students in course design and instruction.

Involvement and personal investment motivate students to succeed, and an online course is the perfect setting for such participation. Encourage students to collect and post helpful links. Have them take turns outlining course topics and pos-ting these summaries for others. Assign teams to design curriculum and teach some topics.

Smart online instructors save time, improve the course site, and raise student interest at the same time by involving students. Students with communication skills can facilitate discussion groups. Students with technical or artistic skills can improve the design of the web site.

7. Make students aware of each other. Create a learning community.

If students send more email to the instructor than to other students, then the course isn't functioning as well as it should. When students interact, they begin to answer each other's questions instead of sending every question to the instructor. Students who are shy around authorities find this outlet especially important. Inter-action is equally critical for social learners.

Use a buddy system, pairing students up at the start of a semester. Form study groups for complex topics. Give team assignments to reduce the grading load and spark interaction. Give your best students extra credit for tutoring or helping those who are having problems.

You can build a course where students are excited to learn and nobody is left out!

Ideas for this article submitted by:

Bob Gora Catawba Valley CC
Marlowe Mager Stanly CC
Phillis Ostheim James Sprunt CC

New Tools to Help Blackboard Administrators Succeed

As online enrollments grow, the servers that host courses become precious resources for colleges. The people who keep the servers running must be empowered to succeed. New tools are being introduced to the Community to support Blackboard administrators.

At some colleges, thousands of students are enrolled in both online courses and face-to-face courses

that use the web for support. At any given time, dozens of instructors may be working to create or improve courses. Users are added, old courses recycled, security protected, and data backups regularly performed. Hundreds are at work on the server and dependent on its consistent function for success.

To aid mission-critical server administration, two new tools have been created. The distribution list "CC_Blackboard Administrators" is available on the system GroupWise email network. Con-tact your GroupWise administrator to be added.

In addition, a Blackboard site called BBAD (short for Black-board Administrators) is now available in "Support Courses for Online Educators" at http://bb.ncccs.cc.nc.us:1677. This will serve as a collaboration point for information sharing among those whose jobs include administration or sup-port of Blackboard servers.

BBAD includes folders on topics such as bugs and fixes, techniques for creating and managing student accounts, security, maximizing server processes, server technical requirements, and advice for interaction with Blackboard technical support. Participants will be able to post information in these folders. Discussion forums are available for questions and answers.

To get started, each college is encouraged to post information about the type of server and version of Blackboard they are running on BBAD. This will allow Blackboard administrators to find those at other colleges who are running a server in equivalent circumstances.

To get access to BBAD, contact Neil Hollands.

Evaluating Online Resources for Instructional Usage

A variety of content is key to online instruction. Diversity of content makes the course more entertaining and engages different learning styles and multiple intelligences. The course becomes more durable because a single point of failure, like the loss of a key web site or new edition of the text can no longer eliminate all the content.

But many educators express concern about the quality of information on the web. Since anyone can post content on the Internet, how can we be sure that students aren't confused or misled by a new site? Online publishing standards are often lower than those of print, so care is needed. Educators should practice site evaluation. Here is a list of 10 questions to ask about a new site.

4 *Is the resource free of obvious errors?*

Skim a part of the site with content you know well for factual or grammatical errors. If you find problems here, the site probably has more.

4 *Is the site regularly updated?*

Good content turns bad when it isn't updated. Track a site over time to make sure it is kept current before sharing it with students. Re-check old favorites before beginning the new semester.

4 *Does the site collect and maintain useful links?*

Links not only makes a site more interesting, they show that the author is aware of other ideas in their field. An obvious bias will often show in the links a site's author chooses to maintain.

- ***Does the site identify and give the qualifications of authors?***

Sites that hide the names, qualifications, and affiliations of authors are questionable. When an individual or organization is listed, they can also be contacted with follow-up questions.

- ***Is the site well designed and easy to read? Do you want to stay and read?***

The best content in the world will go unread if it is designed in an ugly or boring way. If site design is only average, use questions or activities to help students engage with content.

- ***Is the site easy to navigate?***

Can students easily return to the course site from the link? Can they find the portion of content you want them to read in the larger web site? Will they be distracted by less educational portions of the site?

- ***Can all students access the site's content consistently?***

Does the site load slowly? Does it require extra plug-in software like QuickTime, Adobe Acrobat, Flash, or the Real Player? Think twice before making content that some students cannot access necessary for the course.

- ***Is advertising used judiciously?***

A good site can be ruined by pop-up ads or blinking banners. Your course should not be associated with mediocre or faulty products that students might be tempted to buy.

- ***Is the site free of obvious bias or at least honest about its biases? Are corporate backers clearly identified?***

If a good site has a strong bias, consider leaving it out or balancing it with another site that leans in the opposite way.

- ***Is the site appropriate for the audience?***

College students may be insulted if sent to a site that is obviously intended for youngsters. Other content may be too complex for an introductory course. Instructors should find sites that will benefit their students as well as themselves.

As an instructor, don't stop with learning to evaluate web sites yourself. Teach the skill to students. Site evaluation is a versatile base for online assignments that encourages students to think about what they are reading. Critique of a web site is also a good discussion activity. Incorporating this kind of critical thinking into instruction will allow you to take advantage of sites that have some very strong content mixed with other material that is mediocre or fallacious.

A good web site for further exploration of evaluation techniques is http://school.discovery.com/schrockguide/eval.html

In the Next Issue

- Course development teams announced
- Distance learning enrollment statistics
- And much, much more!

Back to previous page

RETURN TO TOP OF CURRENT PAGE

Last modified: Thursday, December 16, 2004 02:40:47 PM

This page maintained by Paula Berardinelli