

Effective Online Course Delivery and Management

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How do you train faculty and students eager to embrace the online environment and WebCT but who are not sure where to start? This presentation offers an overview of several online training courses that were constructed to support quality online and web-enhanced courses.

- **Effective Online Instruction:** to assist faculty with the development of online courses and online course materials...a 10-week, hybrid online course
- **Online Course Management:** to assist faculty anxious to facilitate an online course...a 5-week, hybrid online course
- **Online College Orientation:** to assist students eager to participate in a web-enhanced or online course...a service online course

After Clark State received a Title III grant in October 1998 to expand its efforts to infuse technology into the curriculum, monies became available to hire an Instructional Development Specialist. Clark placed its initial efforts into the development of a 10-week, hybrid online course, **Effective Online Instruction**, to assist faculty with the development of quality online courses and online course materials. This course is required of all prospective online course developers and includes the following general topics of discussion.

- Course Strategies. This unit discusses issues regarding different student learning styles and accommodating those differences through the use of proven online teaching strategies.
- Curriculum Development. Online courses are most successful if success is built into the design of the course. Many college faculty have never had the opportunity to design courses. This unit discusses one method for developing course content.

- Assessment Strategies. Assessment strategies in an online course may be slightly different from more traditional methods of evaluation. This unit introduces how to effectively build various assessment options to evaluate student learning in an online course. Online designers discover that quizzes and exams can be easily managed once developed within a WebCT course. Quizzes and exams are more traditional evaluation approaches to student learning and are less likely to positively affect all participants in an online course. They are, however, easy to grade...for the most part, it's automatic. Additional online assessment options are covered as well.
- Design. This unit provides an opportunity for participants to review each other's design blueprint and begin developing lecture materials using a standard web-authoring tool, FrontPage. While continuing content development, participants learn how to incorporate several WebCT tools to facilitate active student learning (email, chat, URLs, student presentations, PowerPoint, streaming media, etc.).
- Basic Course Management. This unit touches on the WebCT student and course management tools available to online course facilitators.

With the delivery of some of Clark's initial online courses, it soon became apparent that our enrolled online students needed assistance with the technology required in our online courses...from simply logging in to using a few of WebCT's features like email and discussion board. Thus, **Online College Orientation** was developed and made available to any enrolled online student. This service course is provided to all participating faculty and enrolled students and includes the following general topics of discussion.

- Equipment Check. This short checklist details the technology participants will be required to use in any CSCC Online College course and is provided to help troubleshoot potential technical problems.
- Browser Information. Before starting an on-line course, it is important to check the browser to make sure it is compatible with WebCT.
- Navigating A Course. As students begin to maneuver within a WebCT online course, they may want to use the familiar techniques of clicking on the browser's navigation buttons. These are not recommended actions.
- WebCT Tools. WebCT v3.x (Web Course Tools) is the software application Clark State uses to deliver and manage its Online College courses. WebCT provides features for accessing course materials and for user interaction within the course (email, chat, discussions, etc.).
- OhioLINK. OhioLINK Research Databases are available only to current students and staff in OhioLINK institutions. Clark State is an OhioLINK institution.

The College's online course inventory has grown from 3 English courses developed prior to receiving the Title III grant to over 45 online or web-enhanced

courses in various disciplines...Accounting, Art, Biology, Business Management, Chemistry, English, History, Med Lab, Nursing, Psychology, and Theatre Arts. With the volume of courses and multiple sections of online and web-enhanced courses, the College implemented another hybrid online course, **Online Course Management**, which is required of all online course facilitators who have not completed **Effective Online Instruction**. This 5-week, hybrid online course includes the following topics of discussion.

- Prerequisites. This unit addresses the hardware and software issues affecting the use of WebCT by both the facilitator and the student.
- The Interface. Online courses delivered and managed through WebCT are comprised of two general categories of interface pages: course navigational pages and lecture/content pages. An online course facilitator may be required to implement minor modifications that might include changing the facilitator names, dates, phone numbers, and the like.
- Communications. Online course communication can be achieved using any one of several tools...not all of which may be incorporated in any specific online course. This unit discusses how to use and manage the WebCT email system, the discussion board, the calendar, and chat.
- Online Quizzes and Exams. Online assessment tools are many and varied with WebCT. Online course facilitators discover that quizzes and exams can be easily managed once developed within a WebCT course. Quizzes and exams are more traditional evaluations approaches to student learning and are less likely to positively affect all participants in an online course.
- General Course Management. In this unit participants spend a little time working with a few basic online student management and general course management practices. How a facilitator performs some of these activities while "teaching" his/her online class may have more to do with how the College provides student access to an online class than it does with WebCT.

Two additional online initiatives at Clark State include a publicly accessible WebCT tutorial and an online course prerequisite exam. The WebCT tutorial has been edited from a freely available online course from TAFE South Australia (<http://www.tafe.sa.edu.au/top/induct>). The online course prerequisite exam is still in the "pilot" stage; however, Clark will fully implement this prerequisite with the newest release of Colleague. This online exam will be required of all students enrolling in any online course at Clark State.