From the Editor

As the academic year is winding down, the Bb conversion team is winding up with a big pitch for this summer! As Mary Holmes notes on page 2, while 470 faculty have gone through the Bb training, 350 have yet to go through the check-off process, which must be done if we are to receive course shells this fall. Therefore, the team has put together 21 two-hour check-off sessions that will run May through August in FLITE 110. Even the training mentors suggest that instead of meeting with them we go through one of these sessions. And Robbie Teahen suggests we try to get through the process in May or June because additional support will be available then: we’re sure to encounter delays if we wait until August since a limited number of people are qualified to take us through the process.

Please go to page 3 for some miscellaneous notes I’ve gathered about the Blackboard 9.1 transition, and to page 2 for information about this year’s Blackboard conference.

In a recent email to the OTLC, chair Jon Taylor referred us to an interesting article, which I’ve given you some information about on page 3.

Jon is taking the OTLC into a new phase: He has created a blog (see page 2) as well as a Facebook page for us (see this page). Now all of us who teach online at Ferris have two new ways to communicate with each other about online issues. I trust that Jon’s efforts will bring us even closer as a community.

Creating online communities is the subject of the report, on page 5, of the March 23 FCTL panel discussion; and on page 4 you’ll find the second installment of our new regular feature, “What Works for Me.”

~ Elaine

Languages and Literature

Mentors for Online Teaching

~ Jody Ollenquist

Contact any of the faculty members below if you’d like help and support with online teaching. They’re all happy to provide general help with any course and have special expertise in the particular courses listed.

- Lynn Chrenka – writing, linguistics, literacy, and composition theory courses
- Carol Corbett – ENGL 211, 250, 321, and 325
- Roxanne Cullen – ENGL 321
- Dan Ding – ENGL 311
- Katherine Harris – composition, especially ENGL 250 and 321
- Elaine McCullough – ENGL 301, 321, 325
- Jody Ollenquist – ENGL 325, literature courses
- Dennis Ruzicka – ENGL 250, 321
- Linda Sherwood – ENGL 250, 325
- Jonathan Taylor – ENGL 311, 321, 325, literature courses
- Erin Weber – ENGL 311, 323, 325

Thanks to our chair Jon Taylor, OTLC is now on FACEBOOK!
Go to http://www.facebook.com/OnlineTeachingLearning.
The FerrisConnect transition to Blackboard 9.1 is in full swing and headed towards completion for fall 2012. A total of 470 faculty have been trained! But we still have about 350 faculty who need to go through the check-off process before they can receive their course shells. Therefore, to help faculty get checked off, we have set up the following Check-Off Sessions for Summer:

| MAY      | 5-14-2012 | 10-noon | FLITE 110 |
|          | 5-16-2012 | 1-3     |
|          | 5-21-2012 | 10-noon |
|          | 5-22-2012 | 1-3     |
|          | 5-23-2012 | 10-noon |

| JUNE     | 6-12-2012 | 1-3     | FLITE 110 |
|          | 6-13-2012 | 10-noon |
|          | 6-14-2012 | 1-3     |
|          | 6-19-2012 | 10-noon |
|          | 6-20-2012 | 1-3     |

| JULY     | 7-10-2012 | 10-noon |
|          | 7-11-2012 | 1-3     |
|          | 7-17-2012 | 10-noon |
|          | 7-18-2012 | 1-3     |
|          | 7-24-2012 | 10-noon |
|          | 7-25-2012 | 1-3     |

| AUGUST   | 8-1-2012  | 10-12 & 1-3 |
|          | 8-2-2012  | 10-12 & 1-3 |
|          | 8-7-2012  | 10-12 & 1-3 |
|          | 8-8-2012  | 10-12 & 1-3 |
|          | 8-9-2012  | 10-12 & 1-3 |

The latest project for the Online Teaching & Learning Committee is a blog. In partnership with the newsletter, the blog contains short, timely information about teaching and learning in the online universe. It’s available to the world at large, so it will not focus on Ferris-specific issues; that will continue to be the role of the newsletter.

You can find our blog here on Wordpress: [http://onlineteachingandlearning.wordpress.com/](http://onlineteachingandlearning.wordpress.com/).

If you’d like to add something to our blog, even just a link to an interesting article you’ve run across, you can email it to me, or you can submit it via the blog. Look for the Submit link there. You can also subscribe to the blog and get updates by email when we post something new.

**BbWorld 2012 Conference**  
**July 10-12**

This summer, Mary Holmes, Sheila MacEachron, Kathy Archer, Deb Thalner, Steve Costello, Jackie Hughes, and Elaine McCullough will attend the yearly Blackboard conference, held this time in New Orleans, Louisiana.

According to the conference website, “BbWorld is the premier event of the year for [participants] to meet experts, connect with peers, and hear about Blackboard’s product roadmap....In addition to quality session content, BbWorld provides valuable networking opportunities, expert speakers, world-renowned keynote presenters, hands-on training and more.”

Look for reports of our conference experience in the next edition of this newsletter.
July 1 will probably be the earliest date we can request our course shells for the fall semester. Those of us teaching this summer may still use Vista for those classes. We should be sure to get the same mentor for Phases 1 and 2 of our training.

If you're intrigued, go to http://www.facultyfocus.com and sign up for a free subscription so you can download this and other helpful articles. Jon highly recommends the site.

Ten Principles of Effective Online Teaching

In a Special Distance Education Report edited by Christopher Hill, Lawrence C Ragan writes ten essays, each detailing a principle of online teaching. Here are those principles:

- Show Up and Teach
- Practice Proactive Course Management Strategies
- Establish Patterns of Course Activities
- Plan for the Unplanned
- Response Requested and Expected
- Think Before You Write
- Help Maintain Forward Progress
- Safe and Secure
- Quality Counts
- (Double) Click a Mile on My Connection

TLC Transition Notes

- July 1 will probably be the earliest date we can request our course shells for the fall semester.
- Those of us teaching this summer may still use Vista for those classes.
- We should be sure to get the same mentor for Phases 1 and 2 of our training.
- Some people are still experiencing difficulty migrating their Vista courses to Bb 9.1. Jackie Hughes says that the more complex classes may have problems, as well as the material related to the Grade Center. If you are having problems related to course migration, contact Jackie at FCTL, 231-591-3826.
aTube Catcher is an excellent screen-capture software that is SO easy to use. If you’re not comfortable with Tegrity, switch to this sweet little program: It’s free, it’s safe, and you can easily teach your students to use it for their own presentations. Unlike Jing, aTubeCatcher has no restriction on recording time; and depending on your equipment, the video and audio quality is excellent. My students and I have used this program in conjunction with YouTube, where the recordings are uploaded for easy access, and the feedback has been unanimously positive. I certainly find it convenient, especially since, unlike with Tegrity, there’s only a short interval between the time I finish a recording and the time my students can view it.

To get the software, either type in its name into your browser or go to http://atube-catcher.dsnetwb.com/video/. Select Free Download (see Figure 1), save it, and then install it, being sure the catcher’s mitt icon/link is on your desktop.

To use the program, click on the catcher’s mitt icon and you’ll see a relatively small dialog box, shown in Figure 2, against the backdrop of your desktop. Click on Screen Record, located in the second row of links on the screen shown in Figure 2, and you will then be taken to the screen shown in Figure 3. Select Record Cursor and get ready to make a practice recording!

Notice the Start and Stop buttons in the lower right corner. Once you click on Start, immediately the program will begin recording your voice, your computer screen, and the movements of your mouse cursor. (Also, the Start button will then read Pause.) Experiment with a recording for a moment or two, click on Stop, and then on Play. The program has immediately saved your short recording (under a name comprised of numbers) in your Videos folder and will play it for you. You can then evaluate such things as how good the sound is, where to put the aTube Catcher dialog box while you’re recording, and how quickly you must begin talking. (Notice you have the option to delay recording and to choose how long that delay will be.) Once you feel comfortable with the program and are ready to record a “real” presentation, you’ll want to organize the files and other objects to show during your presentation, perhaps by minimizing them in the tray at the bottom of your computer screen.

Once you have a recording you want others to view, get a YouTube account and upload your video to your account: Just follow the easy upload instructions on YouTube.

The only problems you may have using this program will be with your microphones and speaker. If you have a relatively new laptop, you should be good to go; but if you do have problems, check the settings in Output Profile, Audio Device, and Audio Recorder (see Figures 2 and 3). You can also click on Select Audio Device, which will take you to online help at aTube Catcher. The only thing I had to do was adjust the volume. Cheers!
Creating an Online Community

On March 23, the FCTL sponsored a panel discussion, hosted by Faculty-in-Residence Betty Stolarek, on how to create community in online classes.

Panelists were Spence Tower and Beverly DeMarr, College of Business; Sheila MacEachron, Allied Health; and Jon Taylor and Elaine McCullough, Arts and Sciences.

Spence’s presentation was rich in detail, but especially noteworthy was his emphasis on focused discussion questions and response questions, and on giving students examples of high-quality responses. He also talked about such interactive technologies as Skype, and he mentioned ways to promote student interaction with us.

Beverly based her presentation on the marvelous dinner party analogy created by Hayek (Available at http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/online-education/how-many-faculty-discussion-posts-each-week-a-simply-delicious-answer/). For instance, as host, the instructor welcomes each student individually. Beverly noted that her students write a short biography and she responds to each one, welcoming each student and “asking a question to show interest, make connection, and get them in the habit of responding to others’ posts.” She continued with the analogy, giving helpful examples from her own teaching.

Sheila gave many useful tips, such as responding quickly to all student communication so students feel they are actually in contact with someone, thus overcoming the isolation so many online students feel. Also, she noted that generating and maintaining peer-to-peer communication through such means as the discussion board is critical.

Jon’s focus was on “using Adobe Connect to work one-on-one with students in online writing courses. I meet with them to discuss revisions of drafts and to grade their finished work.” With Adobe Connect, Jon and a student can actually talk to each other as they both watch Jon mark on the student’s paper. Jon says that not only do students produce better writing, but they “stay in touch more and let me know about problems.”

Elaine concentrated on a particular online assignment that deals with community-building on several levels. Her advanced business writing students form groups and are given information about how to make those groups successful communities; they then create a company for which they also create a blog, wiki, or social networking site, tasks that require them to imagine the community aspects of business; finally, groups present their sites to each other, thus enabling groups to compare and discuss their work. Individual students get extra credit for viewing group presentations and then commenting on them, which also encourages students to interact.

Providing excellent snacks and beverages, Betty hosted the event with her usual grace. Thanks to her and to the FCTL for the opportunity to learn from each other. If you’d like to know more about these presentations, please contact the individual panelists.

About the OTLC Newsletter

L and L on Line is published twice a semester by the Online Teaching Committee of the Department of Languages and Literature, Ferris State University. Its purpose is to keep members of the Department and others apprised of issues affecting our online teaching. Your contributions and suggestions are welcome. The editor is Elaine McCullough, ASC 3077, x5875, mccullo@ferris.edu.