About the OTLC

The 2013-14 members of the Online Teaching and Learning Committee are Elaine McCullough, Chair; Lynn Chrenka; Tom Stoffer; Eric Warner; Jon Taylor; and Dan Ding. The OTLC is an open committee and welcomes department members who wish to participate.

The mission of the Online Teaching Committee is to promote and facilitate online teaching and learning within the Department of Languages and Literature, act as a resource for best practices, support the use of online technology in the classroom, develop policy guidelines for offering courses online, and represent the department's online interests to other University bodies.

We meet at 11:00 am on the third Thursday of the month, publish a newsletter at least once a semester, and host department workshops and campus-wide activities related to online teaching and learning.

From the Editor

In the last edition of this newsletter, I told you about the Ferris job search for an Associate Provost for Online. As this edition goes to publication, that position has not yet been filled. I hope to report to you the results of that search soon.

Across the page, you will find out about three Ferris projects in which faculty share their expertise with each other, and beginning on page 2 is a timely article on a topic now relevant to many of us: Robert von der Osten explores the mixed-delivery course—its advantages as well as its limitations.

On page 5, Mary Holmes tells us of three Blackboard Building Blocks now available, and on pages 6 and 7, Deb Thalner explains the complex process Ferris undergoes when it “conducts operations” in other states.

Look on page 7 for an excerpt from a recent nationwide study of online education, plus the URL where you can find the entire study.

On pages 8 and 9 is a list of rubrics from Quality Matters™ plus a way to use the rubrics to formulate extra questions on the IDEA evaluation form to survey your students about your online courses. Also on page 9 is a suggestion from Dan Ding about introducing our students to online in the FSU Seminar.

And please look at page 10 for a list of the online areas at Ferris that are among the nation’s best.

Elaine
Mixed about Mixed Delivery

Robert von der Osten

For the last several years, my teaching load has consisted entirely of mixed delivery courses, three credit courses that meet face-to-face two times a week with the third “contact hour” achieved through an online component. I fell into this schedule not really out of any clear assessment of student need but as a result of an act of administrative kindness when I was assigned three online courses and one face-to-face course in my schedule. Someone decided that I might prefer not to travel up from Grand Rapids three days a week for one Big Rapids campus course. Since then, my schedule of mixed delivery courses seems more habitual than deliberate, raising the important question of whether or not this is the best option for students.

There would seem to be a strategic advantage for mixed delivery courses in their ability to accommodate students who have work responsibilities, who may be interviewing for a job, who need a more flexible schedule, or who see themselves as learners better suited to multiple delivery methods (Franklin & Peat, 2000). Indeed, in most of my mixed delivery sections, there are at least a few students who drive from distant locations, have work responsibilities, or have other reasons to prefer a mixed delivery course. However, not surprisingly, most students seem to have signed up for the course because it fit their schedule or because they assumed that a course with two meeting periods and one TBA would be “less work.” Many students each semester seemed unclear at the beginning of the semester that they had signed up for a mixed delivery course or what that entailed. Several students usually have limited access to the appropriate technology to complete the online assignments and some express their general discomfort with participating online. Clearly appropriate placement is an issue.

Similarly there really isn’t a clear model of what kind of blend is right. My sections are two face-to-face meetings a week. However, blended learning offerings can range between 30% to 70% online (Dziuban, Hartman & Moskal, 2004).

Would students be better served by meeting face-to-face only once a week or once every other week? What combination of classroom contact and online instruction would be best for different courses and student populations? It would seem reasonable that the decision about the offerings should be built around student needs and not faculty interests, but it is hard to determine what those needs might be and how to direct students to the blend that best suits them.

Generally the review of mixed delivery courses has also been mixed. Chamberlin (2001) suggests that mixed delivery courses should be able to effectively employ the advantages of both face-to-face and online components. I saw in my own classes the opportunity to use online weekly discussions to increase participation, offer links to a range of supportive internet material, engage students in group projects (revising documents or building projects employing a wiki), provide Tegrity lectures and demonstrations in shorter fifteen minute units that students could better review when they were able to be attentive, and use online quizzes to free class time for projects that I cannot replicate online. However, some have suggested that mixed deliveries rather than being the best of both worlds can also be the worst of both, a non-innovative approach that could be generally ineffective (Jackson & Helms, 2008). Stephen Callaway in a study of two Midwest public universities found in fact that given the array of possible online tools for mixed delivery, students did not have consistent preferences and faculty did not use the available features consistently. The one feature that had a significant correlation with a positive increase in GPA, the use of online tutoring, was the feature least used across the study (2012).

In my own courses, students also respond with a great deal of variation. Some seem to thrive using the online discussion, offering more complete and critical reflection than they would ever be able to achieve in a class setting. Others seem to do the bare minimum and tend to paraphrase what others have posted, despite losing points for doing so. Some make significant contributions to wiki projects; others minimally engage in the project, which, at least, unlike in class projects or out of class group projects, is something I can track and assess appropriately. Even when Tegrity lectures are directly linked to discussions, assignments, and quizzes and tests, at least 25% of students do not view the material on any given week. It is always hard to tell whether students are watching a video, responding on Facebook, or embracing other distractions while listening to a lecture. Though I remind students of the online assignments in class and follow-up on the online project at the next class meeting, on average at least 3 out of 23 students do not complete the online assignment of the course for the week.

One advantage of mixed delivery is that it structurally makes participation a graded condition of part of the course. Not surprisingly, reviews of the literature repeatedly show that students participate more when they receive points for participation (Rocca, 2010). While one can add participation points for student engagement in online discussion to much easily evaluate credit contributions to online activities. If, as Kelly Rocca argues, participation is linked to more motivation, and increased critical thinking, this structural demand for participation would be supportive of student learning. However, there are some unfortunate unintended consequences to this process. Students who do participate get additional points for completing the assignments and participating in discussions that might result in an inflation of their grade over what might be achieved through other measures such as their written work alone. There are usually a few students in each section who routinely fail to participate and have their grades significantly decreased by their lack of involvement. Since the online component is an essential part of the course (a third in my classes), the harm from such failure to participate can be significant.

Of course, the most significant issue is whether blended courses are equivalent in achieving student learning outcomes. Dziuban, Hartman and Moskal suggest that blended courses are effective in achieving outcomes and are met with student and instructor satisfaction (2004). I know that there has been no decrease in my student evaluations as I shifted from face-to-face to blended instruction. However, I have not been able to discover any data substantiating that student learning is equivalent. In a general survey of scores on rubrics across my courses, I do not see any appreciable decrease in performance and might even see some improvement. However, I would be hard pressed to document with reliable data that students achieve the outcomes better or worse than with all face-to-face instruction.

Much of my consideration of mixed delivery courses has focused on the impact on students, which should be a main concern. But there is another major issue that merits attention. Where I used to be on campus on Friday when I taught entirely face-to-face, I usually now stay home to respond to online discussions and other online projects. Those who teach online also have less reason to be on campus. The net effect can be an erosion of a departmental community: faculty members become less available to exchange ideas with colleagues, participate in projects, or simply forge the bonds that secure a community. While this may not immediately impact students, I fear that the possible corrosive impact of mixed delivery and online courses on faculty community may undermine the work of the department, the availability of faculty for projects, and the learning environment itself.

While much of the research and discussion to date has been on entirely online courses, it is important for us to carefully consider as well the place of mixed delivery courses in our educational mix. Below are just a few of the issues that I think merit attention.

- Which courses seem best suited to mixed delivery and with what ratio of face-to-face to online?
- Which courses seem less conducive to mixed delivery?
- How can students be better placed into mixed delivery courses with a clearer understanding of the expectations of such courses?

(Cont. on page 3)
In the end, I am relatively pleased to teach mixed delivery courses. I find the online discussions superior to what I can usually elicit in class. I like having students work on team projects online that can then be the segue to our face-to-face discussion. I find the ability to post supplemental online material an excellent way to complement the course work. Tegrity lectures seem a solid way to present information and demonstrations that can be viewed and reviewed as needed. But it troubles me that some students in the classes seem neither responsible enough nor organized enough to satisfactorily sustain the online requirements. I know that the lectures may be overlooked in a way that a classroom presentation might not. I often wonder if I might be diluting the course slightly and that if I met three times a week at least a reasonable

What are the most effective strategies for different courses to deliver the online portion of

References


Achievements - This Building Block allows instructors and course designers to designate criteria for issuing rewards in the form of both Badges and Certificates. This tool will provide insight into learning progression toward defined competencies. FSU is looking to use this tool for training purposes as well. For instance, all faculty who need to be trained in CPR, blood borne pathogens, lab competencies, etc. could be given a training course within FerrisConnect to complete, and once they have passed a certain competency, could be awarded a Badge. This Badge could then be transferred to Mozilla Open Badging and taken with them if they left the university. This Badge would be widely recognized as a verification of certain skillsets. To find out more about how Mozilla Open Badges works, see openbadges.org.

Financial Aid Reporting - This Building Block enables users to create single and multi-course user participation reports that provide data required for the reporting of student academic contribution in compliance with the return of Title IV Funds, which are rules established by the U.S. Department of Education. Faculty would submit this report to the Registrar’s Office when asked about student participation in a class. This report can be found in the course under Evaluation, and then Course Reports, and is called Single Course User Participation Report.

Respondus Monitor - This Building Block is used to protect online exams. It uses a student’s webcam to record exam sessions, integrates with Lockdown Browser, ensures student identity and deters cheating. This is an ideal solution for non-proctored online exams.

**"Building Blocks” are extensions to the Blackboard Learn platform that allow institutions to plug additional capabilities into the product. They can customize and extend the user experience, workflows, and data storage capabilities of the platform in unique and interesting ways. Commercial and institutional developers create Building Blocks using Blackboard Learn’s publicly available application programming interfaces (APIs) to integrate with other technologies or further customize the product.” (from https://help.blackboard.com/en-

Achievements - This Building Block allows instructors and course designers to designate criteria for issuing rewards in the form of both Badges and Certificates. This tool will provide insight into learning progression toward defined competencies. FSU is looking to use this tool for training purposes as well. For instance, all faculty who need to be trained in CPR, blood borne pathogens, lab competencies, etc. could be given a training course within FerrisConnect to complete, and once they have passed a certain competency, could be awarded a Badge. This Badge could then be transferred to Mozilla Open Badging and taken with them if they left the university. This Badge would be widely recognized as a verification of certain skillsets. To find out more about how Mozilla Open Badges works, see openbadges.org.

Financial Aid Reporting - This Building Block enables users to create single and multi-course user participation reports that provide data required for the reporting of student academic contribution in compliance with the return of Title IV Funds, which are rules established by the U.S. Department of Education. Faculty would submit this report to the Registrar’s Office when asked about student participation in a class. This report can be found in the course under Evaluation, and then Course Reports, and is called Single Course User Participation Report.

Respondus Monitor - This Building Block is used to protect online exams. It uses a student’s webcam to record exam sessions, integrates with Lockdown Browser, ensures student identity and deters cheating. This is an ideal solution for non-proctored online exams.

**"Building Blocks” are extensions to the Blackboard Learn platform that allow institutions to plug additional capabilities into the product. They can customize and extend the user experience, workflows, and data storage capabilities of the platform in unique and interesting ways. Commercial and institutional developers create Building Blocks using Blackboard Learn’s publicly available application programming interfaces (APIs) to integrate with other technologies or further customize the product.” (from https://help.blackboard.com/en-

Achievements - This Building Block allows instructors and course designers to designate criteria for issuing rewards in the form of both Badges and Certificates. This tool will provide insight into learning progression toward defined competencies. FSU is looking to use this tool for training purposes as well. For instance, all faculty who need to be trained in CPR, blood borne pathogens, lab competencies, etc. could be given a training course within FerrisConnect to complete, and once they have passed a certain competency, could be awarded a Badge. This Badge could then be transferred to Mozilla Open Badging and taken with them if they left the university. This Badge would be widely recognized as a verification of certain skillsets. To find out more about how Mozilla Open Badges works, see openbadges.org.

Financial Aid Reporting - This Building Block enables users to create single and multi-course user participation reports that provide data required for the reporting of student academic contribution in compliance with the return of Title IV Funds, which are rules established by the U.S. Department of Education. Faculty would submit this report to the Registrar’s Office when asked about student participation in a class. This report can be found in the course under Evaluation, and then Course Reports, and is called Single Course User Participation Report.

Respondus Monitor - This Building Block is used to protect online exams. It uses a student’s webcam to record exam sessions, integrates with Lockdown Browser, ensures student identity and deters cheating. This is an ideal solution for non-proctored online exams.

**"Building Blocks” are extensions to the Blackboard Learn platform that allow institutions to plug additional capabilities into the product. They can customize and extend the user experience, workflows, and data storage capabilities of the platform in unique and interesting ways. Commercial and institutional developers create Building Blocks using Blackboard Learn’s publicly available application programming interfaces (APIs) to integrate with other technologies or further customize the product.” (from https://help.blackboard.com/en-

Achievements - This Building Block allows instructors and course designers to designate criteria for issuing rewards in the form of both Badges and Certificates. This tool will provide insight into learning progression toward defined competencies. FSU is looking to use this tool for training purposes as well. For instance, all faculty who need to be trained in CPR, blood borne pathogens, lab competencies, etc. could be given a training course within FerrisConnect to complete, and once they have passed a certain competency, could be awarded a Badge. This Badge could then be transferred to Mozilla Open Badging and taken with them if they left the university. This Badge would be widely recognized as a verification of certain skillsets. To find out more about how Mozilla Open Badges works, see openbadges.org.

Financial Aid Reporting - This Building Block enables users to create single and multi-course user participation reports that provide data required for the reporting of student academic contribution in compliance with the return of Title IV Funds, which are rules established by the U.S. Department of Education. Faculty would submit this report to the Registrar’s Office when asked about student participation in a class. This report can be found in the course under Evaluation, and then Course Reports, and is called Single Course User Participation Report.

Respondus Monitor - This Building Block is used to protect online exams. It uses a student’s webcam to record exam sessions, integrates with Lockdown Browser, ensures student identity and deters cheating. This is an ideal solution for non-proctored online exams.

**"Building Blocks” are extensions to the Blackboard Learn platform that allow institutions to plug additional capabilities into the product. They can customize and extend the user experience, workflows, and data storage capabilities of the platform in unique and interesting ways. Commercial and institutional developers create Building Blocks using Blackboard Learn’s publicly available application programming interfaces (APIs) to integrate with other technologies or further customize the product.” (from https://help.blackboard.com/en-

Achievements - This Building Block allows instructors and course designers to designate criteria for issuing rewards in the form of both Badges and Certificates. This tool will provide insight into learning progression toward defined competencies. FSU is looking to use this tool for training purposes as well. For instance, all faculty who need to be trained in CPR, blood borne pathogens, lab competencies, etc. could be given a training course within FerrisConnect to complete, and once they have passed a certain competency, could be awarded a Badge. This Badge could then be transferred to Mozilla Open Badging and taken with them if they left the university. This Badge would be widely recognized as a verification of certain skillsets. To find out more about how Mozilla Open Badges works, see openbadges.org.

Financial Aid Reporting - This Building Block enables users to create single and multi-course user participation reports that provide data required for the reporting of student academic contribution in compliance with the return of Title IV Funds, which are rules established by the U.S. Department of Education. Faculty would submit this report to the Registrar’s Office when asked about student participation in a class. This report can be found in the course under Evaluation, and then Course Reports, and is called Single Course User Participation Report.

Respondus Monitor - This Building Block is used to protect online exams. It uses a student’s webcam to record exam sessions, integrates with Lockdown Browser, ensures student identity and deters cheating. This is an ideal solution for non-proctored online exams.
In the past few years there have been many conversations about our online programs and the impact of federal and state laws that require Ferris to be authorized in any state where we may have students residing. Here’s a primer on the regulations prompting the investigation into the state of residence for our online applicants:

- States have varying regulations and interpretations of what they regard as “conducting operations within their state” – including a variety of issues such as offering classes to their residents; securing internship opportunities in the state; direct marketing within the state; and having a computer server in their state to support distance education. Even when enrollment in a distance learning program may not be a violation of state law, many states apply these rules to direct recruiting of their residents for those distance learning programs. Some states also apply these same rules to internships or practicums, most often when they are directly overseen by a faculty member or supervisor at the place of internship. States often apply these regulations to both distance programs as well as programs based on a traditional campus inside or outside of their state.

- For a good description of the distance education regulations and the "on-ground" regulations, see the WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies blog post of February 14, 2014: https://wcetblog.wordpress.com/2014/02/14/ontandlinetwoostateauthorizationsrules/

- Due to the varying regulations in each state, and the complications these regulations put upon institutions of higher education, there are now many who are supporting the idea of a state authorization reciprocity agreement (SARA). For more information on this recommendation, see this website: http://www.sarahe.org/}

At Ferris, we have been ramping up our focus on ensuring that we are in compliance in any state where we are accepting students. Based upon our understanding of requirements and approvals or exemptions sought to date, we are accepting applications from students in 18 states other than Michigan. In addition, we are accepting applications from students in 20 other states with some kind of qualification about any necessary internship. As a result of these requirements and the heightened awareness of state authorization issues, the Online Learning office is now evaluating applications to online programs to review each applicant’s state of residence. In cases where we are unsure of the status, we then consult with Associate Provost Roberta Teahan for further investigation, and/or get with the program advisor to determine if alternatives to any program internship are possible. Any questions on state authorizations can be directed to Robbie Teahan (teahanr@ferris.edu) or Deb Thalner (thalnerd@ferris.edu).

What is the Future of Online Learning?


Background:

Academic leaders are well aware of the continued growth in online education. They also see what changes, if any, the growth has had for their own institutions.

What do they think the future holds?

The evidence:

Online chief academic officers are strong believers that the number of students taking online courses will continue to grow. They are divided on other aspects of the future of online learning. Ninety percent of academic leaders believe that it is “Likely” or “Very Likely” that a majority of all higher education students will be taking at least one online course in five years’ time. Two-thirds of chief academic officers believe that there will be substantial use of self-paced, self-directed, online courses. Less than one-third of academic leaders believe that there will no longer be concerns about the relative quality of online courses.

For more information, go to http://www.onlinelearningsurvey.com/reports/gradechange.pdf
Introducing Online Classes to Students in FSU Seminar—An Integrated Approach
~Daniel Bing

Taking an online class is not easier than taking a face-to-face class, as quite a few students think. Actually, it is more challenging in that students are required to read more materials, and often times work on their own. In my online classes this semester, I have several students who think an online class is easier than a face-to-face class. Many of them rarely read course materials or assignment instructions. One student keeps submitting wrong papers even though I have told her again and again that she should follow instructions. She argued that she had taken a similar class last semester and that she “know[s] everything.” Now, she still refuses to read instructions or any other course materials.

This is perhaps an example of an extreme case, but still it should allow us to think about the various challenges facing students in online classes. How do we teach our students, particularly students who take online classes for the first time, to understand and handle these challenges? Perhaps we should consider an integrated approach. That is, we introduce online classes to students in FSU Seminar and make it part of the seminar that students complete a lesson fully online and the same lesson face-to-face. Hopefully, by comparing these experiences, students can see the challenges of completing online lessons and begin developing strategies for approaching these challenges.

---

TRY THIS!

The table on the left comes from the Quality Matters™ rubric for online courses. Suggestion: Based on these standards, create “Extra Questions” for the IDEA course evaluation form to get feedback from your students about your online course. Below are a key and some example questions:

(Thanks to Julie Rowan of FCTL for creating the table!)

Extra Questions: About the Online Component of this Course:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>True</th>
<th>False</th>
<th>More True</th>
<th>More False</th>
<th>In Between</th>
<th>Definitely True</th>
<th>Definitely False</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>48.</td>
<td>The course itself was easy to access.</td>
<td>50.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>False</td>
<td></td>
<td>False</td>
<td>Definitely False</td>
<td>Definitely True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49.</td>
<td>Navigating the course was easy.</td>
<td>51.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>False</td>
<td></td>
<td>False</td>
<td>Definitely False</td>
<td>Definitely True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50.</td>
<td>Locating specific instructional materials was easy.</td>
<td>52.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>False</td>
<td></td>
<td>False</td>
<td>Definitely False</td>
<td>Definitely True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51.</td>
<td>Technical skills required in the course were clearly explained.</td>
<td>53.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>False</td>
<td></td>
<td>False</td>
<td>Definitely False</td>
<td>Definitely True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52.</td>
<td>Technical tools required in the course were clearly explained.</td>
<td>54.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>False</td>
<td></td>
<td>False</td>
<td>Definitely False</td>
<td>Definitely True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53.</td>
<td>Technical tools required in the course were easy to access.</td>
<td>55.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>False</td>
<td></td>
<td>False</td>
<td>Definitely False</td>
<td>Definitely True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54.</td>
<td>The grading policy for the course was clearly communicated.</td>
<td>56.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>False</td>
<td></td>
<td>False</td>
<td>Definitely False</td>
<td>Definitely True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55.</td>
<td>Submitting assignments was easy.</td>
<td>57.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>False</td>
<td></td>
<td>False</td>
<td>Definitely False</td>
<td>Definitely True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56.</td>
<td>I was provided with opportunities to monitor my own progress.</td>
<td>58.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>False</td>
<td></td>
<td>False</td>
<td>Definitely False</td>
<td>Definitely True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57.</td>
<td>I interacted with other students in the class multiple occasions.</td>
<td>59.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>False</td>
<td></td>
<td>False</td>
<td>Definitely False</td>
<td>Definitely True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58.</td>
<td>I felt actively engaged with the course activities and other students.</td>
<td>60.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>False</td>
<td></td>
<td>False</td>
<td>Definitely False</td>
<td>Definitely True</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Introducing Online Classes to Students in FSU Seminar—An Integrated Approach
~Daniel Bing

Taking an online class is not easier than taking a face-to-face class, as quite a few students think. Actually, it is more challenging in that students are required to read more materials, and often times work on their own. In my online classes this semester, I have several students who think an online class is easier than a face-to-face class. Many of them rarely read course materials or assignment instructions. One student keeps submitting wrong papers even though I have told her again and again that she should follow instructions. She argued that she had taken a similar class last semester and that she “know[s] everything.” Now, she still refuses to read instructions or any other course materials.

This is perhaps an example of an extreme case, but still it should allow us to think about the various challenges facing students in online classes. How do we teach our students, particularly students who take online classes for the first time, to understand and handle these challenges? Perhaps we should consider an integrated approach. That is, we introduce online classes to students in FSU Seminar and make it part of the seminar that students complete a lesson fully online and the same lesson face-to-face. Hopefully, by comparing these experiences, students can see the challenges of completing online lessons and begin developing strategies for approaching these challenges.

---

---