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# **Developing and Teaching an Online Course:**

## **A Faculty Handbook May, 2000**





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# Acknowledgements

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# Introduction

This handbook on developing and teaching an online course comes out of a two year project to evaluate effective Web-based course development and delivery. Information for this handbook is taken from current educational technology literature, resources on assessment techniques, data gathered from interviews with online instructors and student responses to surveys and interviews during a one year research study.

The intent of this handbook is to provide instructors with an introduction to online course development and delivery practices. As instructors become more involved in incorporating Web-based technologies into their teaching practice, their questions and needs will change. For this reason, references to instructional and technical support staff, services and resources are listed throughout the handbook. Instructors are encouraged to make use of these available resources to support their ongoing professional development.

Checklists have been included at the beginning of each section to enable instructors to use this handbook as a workbook to track their ongoing professional development in online teaching. The questions included in the checklists are intended to help instructors focus on their needs in developing and delivering online courses or course components.

Providing ongoing support to instructors embarking on online teaching, whether as an extension of their classroom based courses or at a distance, is a challenging proposition. We hope this handbook will provide a useful guide and reference tool. The staff participating in the Learn Online project have had an opportunity to experience and benefit from the true spirit of team work while endeavoring to make online education happen at Grant MacEwan College. This handbook represents an extension of the collaborative spirit that we would like to share with the rest of the College.

# Table of Contents

<b>Online Teaching</b> .....	1
What is online teaching? .....	1
Why should I use online learning technologies to teach? .....	2
Why should I consider changing how I design my courses? .....	4
Resources .....	5
<b>Getting Started</b> .....	6
Getting Started Checklist .....	6
What level of online development does my course need? .....	6
What do I want my students to learn? What are my goals for my course? .....	7
Drafting Learning Outcomes .....	7
What components of online learning do I want to integrate into my course? ...	7
What computer skill competencies do I want students to have? .....	9
Who can I contact for more information .....	10
<b>Content</b> .....	11
Content Checklist .....	11
Format of Content .....	12
Text .....	12
Graphics .....	13
Sound and Video .....	14
Using Online Resources .....	15
Web sites .....	15
Online databases with full-text articles .....	16
Updating Course Content .....	16
Copyright Issues .....	16
Copyright Permission Letter .....	18
<b>Learning Activities</b> .....	19
Learning Activities Checklist .....	19
Review questions .....	20
Essays/Reports .....	21
Discussion .....	22
Case studies .....	25
Visual Studies .....	25

Problem-based learning activities .....	26
Examinations .....	27
Simulations .....	27
Plagiarism .....	28
Resources .....	29
<b>Evaluation .....</b>	<b>31</b>
Evaluation Checklist .....	31
Assessing Prior Knowledge, Recall, and Understanding .....	32
Focused Listing .....	32
Misconception/Preconception Check .....	34
Empty Outlines .....	36
Minute Paper .....	37
Assessing Skills in Analysis and Critical Thinking .....	39
Analytic Memos .....	39
Word Journal .....	41
Assessing Skill in Problem Solving .....	43
Problem Recognition Tasks .....	43
What's the Principle? .....	44
Assessing Skill in Application and Performance .....	46
Directed Paraphrasing .....	46
Applications Cards .....	48
Paper or Project Prospectus .....	49
Assessing Students' Awareness of their Attitudes and Values .....	52
Class Opinion Polls .....	52
Everyday Ethical Dilemmas .....	54
Focused Autobiographical Sketches .....	55
<b>Student Guide .....</b>	<b>57</b>
Student Guide Checklist .....	57
Course Overview .....	57
Required Materials .....	58
Student Evaluation System .....	58
Administrative Support .....	58
Technical Support .....	59
Expectations for Students .....	59
Expectations for the Instructor .....	60
Student Competencies for Successful Online Learning .....	61

Resources .....	62
Learning Resource Center .....	62
<b>Support</b> .....	64
Copyright Curriculum Consultant .....	64
Instructional Media and Design .....	64
Learn Online Project .....	66
Learning Resource Centre (LRC) .....	67
Library services available to instructors .....	68
Professional Development .....	68
Online Resources .....	69
Printed Resources .....	71
<b>Competencies</b> .....	72
Online Teaching and Course Development Skills .....	72
Resources .....	73
<b>References</b> .....	74

# Online Teaching

This section of the handbook discusses what online teaching is and why you, the instructor, should consider using online learning technologies.

## What is online teaching?

Online teaching is teaching that uses technologies such as:

- the Internet
- the World-Wide Web
- E-mail
- Word processing
- Online course delivery software such as WebCT
- Web-based communications such as discussion lists and bulletin boards, chat rooms or other forms of computer conferencing
- E-mail-based communications such as listservs

These technologies can also be mixed with other delivery formats, including print, site-based activities, and all forms of communication methods such as mail, e-mail, telephone, fax, audio-conferencing, and video-conferencing. Online teaching can be used in a distance delivery context or as an adjunct to a face-to-face classroom. Instructors teaching online need to plan and organize their course prior to the beginning of the course regardless of the context. The instructional design of a course taught wholly or partly online can require an instructor to adopt new or different ways of using course components. Although online instruction should not be driven by the limitations or requirements of the technology used, online learning technologies can be used to enhance the presentation of content, to facilitate student learning activities, and to facilitate communication between course participants.

Instructional design in online learning should address the purpose of the course content, its primary audience, and the expectations for learner outcomes and experiences, including the type of inter-

**Example 1** Chris teaches an on-campus introductory psychology course and wants his students to develop their abilities to write, revise, and cite research papers. He knows his students will need those skills in their future academic careers but finds he doesn't have enough time during class to help his students learn those skills. He puts information and practice exercises online, encourages his students to contact him by e-mail if they are having difficulties, and refers to the Web page resources during the class, incorporating them into students' preparation for class assignments.

**Example 2** Joan teaches a distance delivery human relations course in which her students learn about and develop interpersonal skills required in their field. She includes several online assignments that require the students to read course material and to view short video clips demonstrating different kinds of interactions, reflect on how that information is related to their own experience, and then practice those interpersonal skills with a partner. Her students work in pairs, communicating through personal e-mail and through an exercise using the course discussion list, and submit the assignment for that module. She monitors the online discussion list and adds her comments to their work when she feels the partner groups need some additional guidance. The module ends with a week-long, asynchronous discussion through which the students give their feedback about the assignment and the instructor provides a summary of the students' work.

action and communication required. Course developers should consider the following questions:

- Who are my students? What are their needs?
- What are the course objectives or outcomes? Are they clear and achievable?
- What is an appropriate sequence for content and learning activities within the course?
- How will you use the technology to fulfill instructional goals?
- Will the course format and delivery facilitate or prevent students from accessing the course?
- How will assignments and exams be structured?
- What kind of student participation is expected?
- How will student learning be evaluated? Do the evaluation methods match the course objectives or outcomes?

As in print-based courses, consistency in design and organization must be established and maintained across course materials.

## **Why should I use online learning technologies to teach?**

Some short answers to this question are as follows:

- Students who work full-time, who have family responsibilities, or who are at a distance from the College can access courses online from home or work.
- Online communication provides a way for students and instructors to communicate in a timely manner.
- In the information age, there is an intrinsic need to learn technology.
- Students can learn where and how to find information in an information-rich world.
- Students can develop computer literacy by applying various computer skills as part of the learning process.

The long answer to this question depends on how you are

using learning technologies, including the context in which you are using them. Learning technologies, in most cases, facilitate learning activities that can also be done without the technologies. In the classroom, learning technologies can supplement and support classroom teaching and learning. Instructors using learning technologies in their face-to-face classroom frequently use them to “free up” class time by shifting administrative or supplemental classroom activities to another format so class time can be used for activities that benefit the most from occurring in the classroom environment.

In distance education, these same technologies may constitute the primary method of delivering course content and facilitating student learning activities. In distance education, learning technologies are seen as a way to overcome the learner’s sense of isolation by providing better communication and interaction, higher motivation, and a sense of being a part of a community of learners. These benefits can also occur when learning technologies are used in a face-to-face classroom.

Some benefits of integrating learning technologies into your course:

- They facilitate individual communication among students and between students and the instructor. Several studies have reported that students use communication technologies such as e-mail to contact their instructors and other students more frequently than during class or faculty office hours, or by telephone. E-mail and computer conferencing give students opportunities to participate in class discussions in a safer and more thoughtful way. Because no one can observe how long or how much effort it takes for a student to respond online, students who may be disadvantaged in a face-to-face discussion such as, shy students or those taking English as a Second Language are more likely to communicate successfully because they have more time to compose their questions and responses. Students can get more and better feedback from their peers and instructors using these communication technologies.

**Example** Online learning technologies can be used for:

- an interactive lecture during which the instructor pauses frequently to check for student understanding
- a group problem-solving activity that requires students to apply what they are learning
- an instructor feedback session on student work as a way to correct and advance student understanding

**Note** Research studies have reported that the most important factor affecting the successful implementation of learning technologies in teaching practice is the instructors' perception that using the technologies will add value to their practice and that the value gained is worth the time, effort, and difficulties encountered during the implementation process.

- Content can be presented in nontextual formats if a visual, aural, or animated presentation will better facilitate a learner's understanding of a concept.
- Students can repeat learning activities such as self-tests as often as they need to in order to understand the content.

Some difficulties with integrating learning technologies into your course:

- Students and instructors must learn to use unfamiliar technologies. Supporting students and instructors using learning technologies is a challenge, especially as more people use them. Most current technical support services were designed to meet the needs of early technology adopters. As more people use learning technologies, they will require more and different technical support services. Refer to the section at the end of the handbook on competencies for more information about the competencies you will need to teach online.
- Online communication is predominantly text-based, requiring that all participants have good written communication skills. Miscommunications can happen frequently and can be harder to resolve than face-to-face misunderstandings.
- When learning how to use learning technologies, it is easy to put the demands of using the technology before instructional goals or learning outcomes. Instructors should decide what they want to teach and how they want to teach before deciding how to use the learning technologies that are most compatible with the objectives of their course and the characteristics of their learners.

### **Why should I consider changing how I design my courses?**

Many instructors who have already developed courses to deliver either partly or wholly online have found that they needed to rethink how their courses are organized and pre-

sented. Because learning technologies provide instructors with options on how to present content and how to engage the student with it, many instructors and course developers view the integration of learning technologies into teaching practice as an opportunity to review and revise that practice.

If you use learning technologies in your teaching practice, your students will be required to be self-directed when accessing resources, learning how to use course software, overcoming technical difficulties, and learning how to communicate more effectively online. Students accustomed to instructor-centred teaching practices such as a lecture-only format or print-based course modules may have difficulty understanding their responsibilities as learners in an online course or in online portions of a course. Instructors need to explain to students how and why the course is structured as it is and the role of the learning technologies within that structure.

## Resources

- The Educational Technology Professional Development (ETPD) module *Writing a Print-Based Module*. For more information about this module or other modules in the ETPD Program, contact Val Stewart at 497-5606 or <stewartv@admin.gmcc.ab.ca>. To order the modules, call Clayton Wright at 497-5286 or order online at <<http://etpd.gmcc.ab.ca>>.
- For assistance in developing course objectives or outcomes, contact Diane Emberg at 497-5232 or <embergd@admin.gmcc.ab.ca>.
- *Strategies for Designing Instruction in Web-based Computer Conferencing Environments*, by Paulette Robinson, University of Maryland College <<http://www.inform.umd.edu/About/.IIT/probinso/epiphany/strategies.html>>. This site presents a good overview of instructional design issues in online teaching and learning.

**Note** A recent study reported that instructors who were most successful in implementing learning technologies into their teaching practice used them in ways that supported their existing beliefs about and strategies for teaching. It is difficult, however, to learn how to implement learning technologies effectively while also trying to change instructional practice. Instructors in the Learn Online project at Grant MacEwan College found that once they felt comfortable using Web-based learning technologies, they became more interested in changing how they used them. In one example, after teaching a course for two semesters, an instructor began to examine ways to make better use of computer-facilitated communication.

# Getting Started

## Getting Started Checklist

Here are some questions to help you focus on what you need to know or do before beginning to develop an online course:

- ❑ Who are my students?
- ❑ What are the learning goals or outcomes for the course?
- ❑ What parts of the course would benefit from online learning technologies?
  - content
  - resources
  - communication
  - learning activities
  - evaluation activities
- ❑ What computer competencies do I want my students to develop in this course?
- ❑ Who can I contact for more information, resources, or assistance?

This section of the handbook is an overview of the questions and activities you need to address to develop a course online.

## What level of online development does my course need?

Knowing your students and their needs is an important first step to determining what kind of learning technologies you should use and how you should integrate them into your course. If your students can't access the online components of your course, it will not meet their learning needs. Answering the following questions can help you assess what you know about your students.

Who can I contact for more information, resources, or assistance?

Refer to the Support section of the handbook for a list of people and resources to assist you in getting started teaching online.

- What educational backgrounds do the students have?
- Are the students part-time or full-timers?

**Example** A large number of students in the Bachelor of Applied Human Services Administration (HSAD) Degree program are administrators in community service and/or nonprofit agencies. Many of them are located in rural communities and are isolated from professional development resources and from other administrators doing similar work. These students tend to be in low- to middle-income positions and if they have a computer or access to a computer, tend not to have recent computer equipment or highly developed computer skills. Putting all of the HSAD distance courses completely online would create a barrier to students wanting to access these courses. Current HSAD courses are delivered as print-based modules, but the course design also includes online communications such as bulletin board and e-mail. Students can communicate more easily with other administrators and can use their interaction in the course to develop better communication skills and a familiarity with the Internet and the

## Example

**Who:** I (the instructor)

**Does what:** want to develop my students' skill at figuring out which questions to ask next

**To/for whom:** (my students)

**When:** when they don't know how to solve a problem

**Where:** in their homework assignments

**How:** by teaching them a variety of techniques for getting "unstuck"

**Why:** so that they can become more effective, independent problem solvers.

**Goal:** I (the instructor) want to develop my students' skill at figuring out what questions to ask next when they don't know how to solve a problem in their homework assignments by teaching them a variety of techniques for getting "unstuck" so they can become more effective, independent problem solvers.

(Example taken from *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers* 2nd Ed. T. A. Angelo and K. P. Cross, ©1993 Jossey-Bass. Adapted by permission of Jossey-Bass, Inc., a subsidiary of John Wiley & Sons. Inc.)

**Resource** See Teaching Goals Inventory, pp. 20–22, from T. A. Angelo and K. P. Cross, *Classroom Assessment Techniques*, to fill out the self-scoring Teaching Goals Inventory that helps you become more aware of what you want to achieve in a particular course.

- Have the students had experience with self-directed or online learning?
- Do the students currently have access to a computer?

## What do I want my students to learn? What are my goals for my course?

One way to develop explicit course goals is to write a one sentence summary of a course-specific goal. The example provided in the margin and the Teaching Goals Inventory can help you determine your goals for your course.

Once your instructional goals are clear, you need to develop content, learning activities, and assessment activities that correspond to those goals.

## Drafting Learning Outcomes

Many programs at Grant MacEwan College are now using a Learning Outcomes approach to course and program development. This approach focuses on the learning the students will achieve as opposed to the inputs or processes that the course will provide. To determine the learning outcomes for your course, ask yourself:

What integrated, applied, transferable knowledge, skills, abilities, and judgments should your students possess when they complete your course?

This question should generate four to six broad outcomes for your course. Then you may want to list learning objectives for each section of your course.

For assistance in drafting learning outcomes for your online course or to see sample learning outcomes drafted for existing courses, contact Diane Emberg, Curriculum Consultant, at 497-5232 or [embergd@admin.gmcc.ab.ca](mailto:embergd@admin.gmcc.ab.ca).

## What components of online learning do I want to integrate into my course?

Your course will have the following components that may be partly or entirely developed and implemented online:

- **Course introduction**

The course introduction is a course outline that contains information about the course structure and procedures, including the titles of modules, course objectives or outcomes, list of assignments and exams, instructor contact information, student evaluation and grading criteria, course schedule, and resources needed to complete the course.

- **Module introduction**

The module introduction should list module objectives or learning outcomes and introduce the student to the content and learning activities within the module. Linking the learning objectives for each module to the objectives or outcomes for the entire course shows the student how each module fits into the overall course.

- **Content**

The content is the information the student is expected to learn in order to fulfill the course objectives. Content is presented through text, pictures and sound. In an online environment, content can be presented through Web-based text, graphics, animations, video clips or video-recordings, sound clips or audio-recordings, and access to online resources.

- **Learning Activities**

Learning activities engage the learner with the content to achieve the learning objectives or outcomes for the course. Some of the learning activities facilitated by Web-based learning technologies are:

Self-tests – students get immediate feedback on their knowledge of the content. Self-tests can be repeated as often as students require prior to completing assignments or exams.

Bulletin boards, chat rooms and e-mail – students can communicate with each other and the instructor to share and build on content knowledge. Students and instructors can refer to previous messages throughout the course.

Multimedia-enhanced presentations – some concepts may be better presented using pictures, sound, or motion. Some examples of multimedia presentations include:

- ◆ An interactive picture of a lab that allows students to click on parts of the picture to get more information about equipment and lab procedures
- ◆ An animation of a mathematical proof to show each step of the calculation
- ◆ A video clip of a scenario used in a case study
- ◆ A simulation that helps students learn how to use a piece of equipment

Learning activities are discussed in greater detail in the Learning Activities section of the handbook.

- **Evaluation Activities: Assignments and Exams**  
Evaluation activities should relate to the learning objectives or outcomes you established at the beginning of the course. Students need to know what constitutes a successful outcome. Specific outcomes, accomplishments, learner characteristics, and attitudes should be as clearly described as possible in the course introduction and/or in the instructions for assignments. In an online environment, formal evaluation activities such as exams can be handled through computer-mediated testing programs available here on campus or at remote sites. Informal evaluation activities such as student feedback forms and automatically scored tests provide students and instructors with quick feedback about student learning that can highlight areas that students need to review.

Evaluation activities are discussed in greater detail in the Evaluation section of the handbook.

### **What computer skill competencies do I want students to have?**

- What technology-related skills will students need upon graduation?
- What technology-related skills should students acquire or develop during their program?

Refer to the Student Guide section of the handbook for a list of competencies students require for successful online learning.

You can also visit the Online Student Tutorial website at <http://learn.gmcc.ab.ca/lol/students/tutorial> for information about competencies that students require for successful online learning.

### **Who can I contact for more information, resources, or assistance?**

Refer to the Support section of the handbook for a list of people and resources to assist you in getting started teaching online.

# Content

## Content Checklist

Here are some questions to review once you have developed the content for your course:

- Is the content related to the learning goals or outcomes for the course?
- Have I incorporated a textbook or other resources?
- Have I incorporated online resources?
- Have I considered the organization and sequence of the content?
- Is the content clear, accurate, and easy to read?
- Has the course content been reviewed by a second reader?
- Has the course content been edited?
- What concepts or ideas in the content would benefit from being presented as pictures, graphics, sounds, animations, audio or video?
- Have I talked with technical staff to determine development plans for multimedia applications?

This section of the handbook will discuss content issues that are relevant to presenting content in an online format. Instructors are content experts and knowledgeable about what they want students to learn in their content area. The options presented here are focused on ways to make effective use of online learning technologies to support student learning of course content.

This section discusses:

- Format of content
- Using online resources
- Updating course content
- Copyright issues

**Resource** *Course Developer's Manual*, C. Wright – section 3.0 on Content Organization and module format. (Available City Centre, Jasper Place and Millwoods LRC's, call number LB2361 .W75)

**Tip** Consider organizing content into short sections which a student can work through in 15 to 30 minute sessions. One of the possibilities for learning online is that students who do not have time to come to class on campus can access courses around their schedules. For some students this may be during their lunch, before or after work, or after children have gone to bed. By organizing content into discrete, meaningful chunks of information, students can make better use of their time spent on course content and can more easily track which sections they have already covered.

**Example** After finishing module 2, students have the option of continuing to work sequentially through module 3 which introduces a new topic or to go to module 4 which expands on the ideas covered in module 2 before going back to the third module.

## Format of Content

An online course does not necessarily mean that all content must be presented to the student online. Course content can be presented in printed or online text, through pictures, sounds, animations, or videos. A combination of delivery methods is more frequently used than only one delivery method.

Some examples of effective content presentation using Web-based learning technologies include:

### Text

Much of the information in a course is text-based. When considering how to present text-based information some useful questions are:

- Will you use a textbook(s)? If your course relies heavily on a textbook or has a lot of text, consider providing the bulk of the course material in print format. Long sections of text are more easily read in print rather than on-screen. The online course structure can provide a value-added outline with learning and evaluation activities, references to content in the textbook or printed course materials, links to online resources, and a way to communicate with students. Consider preparing a printed course booklet with longer sections of content. You can use the on-line course framework to refer students to the appropriate section in the booklet.
- Will you expect students to go through the content in a particular sequences, i.e. does the student need to learn topic A before learning about topic B, C, and D? If the sequence of the content is important, you need to ensure the content is organized appropriately and include instructions to the students on how they need to go through it. If the content organization does not require a particular structure, consider including references or links between different sections or modules that allow the student to go through the course by following the relationships between the content sections.

- What do you do if you have a large amount of content students need to read through?

In one example, the instructor wanted to include a detailed assessment form that students will have to know how to use in the workplace. The form was long, with many sections and had pages of information students needed to learn in order to use the assessment form effectively. The instructional designer created an interactive version of the form so that students could click with the mouse on each section to open up an inset box containing information specific to that section. The designer also included a link to a print-friendly version so students could print out the information and keep it for future reference.

### Graphics

Some concepts are better represented by drawings, pictures, diagrams, or other static visual images. A good picture is worth a thousand words and can enhance the presentation of text-based content. Students may, however, need supporting textual information to tell them what is important in the picture or graphic. Some things to consider when including graphics in your course are:

- The larger the graphic, the longer it will take for that page to load. In the recent Learn Online survey, students reported not being able to access a slide presentation because it took 3 to 4 minutes for each slide to load, making the complete slide presentation over an hour long.
- Graphics may appear differently on student computers due to differences in monitor size, limitations in computer video hardware, computer configuration and depending on which browser they are using. For example, a graphic that fits perfectly in the screen of your computer may not appear in only one screen in another computer. One reason why Netscape Navigator and Microsoft Explorer version 4.0 or higher are a minimum recommended computer requirement is that earlier versions of these browsers may not display some graphics accurately.

**Tip** Another option is to use a print-friendly online text format like pdf to put long documents or documents with a variety of graphical elements such as tables, mathematical formulas, or small illustrations online. Pdf format can be converted from a word processed document, retaining original formatting including page numbers. In order to read a pdf document, students will have to download and install Adobe Acrobat reader, a free, commonly used software program. Many documents available on the World Wide Web, particularly government or research reports, are in this format. Students with computers below the minimum requirements may have difficulty in installing Adobe Acrobat or other programs. Refer to the Learn Online Web page at <http://learn.gmcc.ab.ca> for minimum computer requirements.

**Tip** When considering multimedia elements, remember your students. Increasing the number of multimedia elements increases the technical complexity of the course and usually increases the amount of software a student will have to download in order to view them. It will also increase the number of problems you and your students will have to solve, particularly if your students are using older computer equipment and software.

**Resource** Minimum Computer Requirements:

- Pentium or PowerMac computer with 32 MB of RAM and 50 MB of hard drive space
- 33.6 modem connection
- Netscape Navigator or Internet Explorer 4.0
- Printer
- Word Processor

- Multimedia programs can be used to create interactive visual aids. In one example, the instructor wanted to familiarize students with the work stations in a clinical lab environment. Using Quicktime VR, pictures were taken of the lab which allowed students to click on the different work stations to get information about protocols for using the chemicals at that station and lab procedures such as the proper way to wash hands before treating a client. The students are able to read the information and relate it directly to the visual context of the picture of the lab.

### Sound and Video

Sound and video elements can also enhance your course material, particularly when you want to demonstrate a process or procedure or want to show students a model of good (or bad) practice such as an application of interviewing skills in an actual interview situation or an interaction between a practitioner and a client. Some things to consider when using sound and video elements in your course are:

- The larger the video or sound clip, the longer it will take for the page to load. High quality video or sound recordings (clearer images or sound, that play smoothly) take longer to load than poorer quality ones. Although larger and longer recordings are possible to present on the Web, currently, video clips that are only a minute or two long and no larger than approximately 2 inches by 3 inches are reasonably accessible by students with the minimum recommended computer requirements. With these limitations, you need to consider carefully what you want to present in a video or sound clip.
- In order to access sound and video elements, students will have to download and install software programs called "plug-ins". These programs are freely available on the Internet. Some commonly used plug-ins include Shockwave, Real Player, and Flash. Using plug-ins increases the potential for the number of technical problems you and your students will encounter.

If the information you are including in these elements is essential to the course, you should be prepared to provide that information in another format. In the recent Learn Online study, some students indicated that they did not resolve technical difficulties in accessing some multimedia elements so did not access them.

## Using Online Resources

The Internet and the World Wide Web contain vast amounts of information and can be a good source of course content. Many resources are available online, from the controlled databases and online journals available through the LRC home page to government reports and association or organization Web sites. Before incorporating online resources into your course content, there are several things to consider:

- Is the Web site stable? How often will you have to update the Web site address in the course?
- How accurate is the information? Who is the Web site author?
- Students will encounter more difficulties accessing external Web sites than content within the course structure; Web resources are better used to support and enhance course content than replace it.

## Web sites

Provide students with instructions about what part of the Web site you want them to read, rather than only providing the Web site address. Students can easily become distracted by the vast amount of information available and may find themselves spending hours on material not related to course activities. Giving the students guidance on what to focus on while accessing online resources provides needed structure to their information-gathering activities.

**Resource** Erwin Veugelers, computer-based instructional developer for Instructional Media and Design can work with you to develop your online course or online components for your course. Contact Erwin at (780) 497-5293 or <veugelerse@admin.gmcc.ab.ca> for a free initial consultation.

**Tip** Pointing students toward online resources is similar to pointing students towards recommended books or articles that you are not providing with the course material. You are not including the material as part of your course so do not require copyright permission. If you are asking your students to access an online resource as a required resource for your course, however, it is a good idea to contact the author of the Web page to let them know you will be sending your students there.

**Resource** Lynn Feist, instructional designer and Gord Lacey, Web developer for the Learn Online project are happy to share their experience with online instructional development and multimedia applications in the Learn Online project with you. Contact Lynn at (780) 497-5407 or <feistl@admin.gmcc.ab.ca> and Gord at (780) 497-5289 or <laceyg@admin.gmcc.ab.ca>.

**Tip** Consider including all of your online resources in one place within your course and refer to the resource list throughout the course modules. The URLs for Web-based resources require frequent updating and keeping them in one place will make updating your course easier.

## Online databases with full-text articles

The LRC subscribes to several Web-delivered databases that provide access to full text journal articles of a scholarly nature as well as to full text newspaper and magazine articles. The complete list of databases, plus database information, is available through the Electronic Databases link on the LRC Web site at <<http://www.lrc.gmcc.ab.ca>>. Online databases are accessible from any computer terminal on campus equipped with a Web browser. Off-campus users can access databases by entering the 13 digit bar code number from the student or staff ID card.

If you are requiring students to do research papers in your course, you should consider providing students with instruction on how to use the online databases to locate information. For on-campus students, instructors can contact Anna Korus, reference library technician at 497-5884 or [korusa@yeats.gmcc.ab.ca](mailto:korusa@yeats.gmcc.ab.ca) to discuss your students' research or learning activity needs and to arrange for instruction. Off-campus students can use the Ask a Question service available on the LRC Web site at <<http://www.lrc.gmcc.ab.ca>> (click on Ask a Question) or by e-mail at [virtual@yeats.gmcc.ab.ca](mailto:virtual@yeats.gmcc.ab.ca)

## Updating Course Content

- How do I make changes in the course once it is finished? The most frequently needed change to an online course is updating changed Web site addresses. You can enter the new URL if you are comfortable editing HTML or forward updates to the technical staff assisting you with course development and maintenance. In the Learn Online project, content changes are not made unless there is approval from the program chair. If instructors want to provide additional information to the course, they use the discussion list or bulletin board.

## Copyright Issues

- How do I ensure I am not violating copyright laws when I use resources in my online course? Current Canadian copyright legislation does not include Internet or Web based resources. Until legal use of these resources is

defined, it is a good idea to be cautious when using them in your online course. If you are including outside sources in your course, whether print-based or online, you should seek and receive copyright permission.

- How do I get copyright permission for online resources? Many Web sites include statements regarding copyright permission. Often permission to use the material can be obtained by contacting the Web site author whose e-mail address usually appears at the bottom of the opening screen. You should be aware that the author may want compensation for use of his or her materials or may set limits on your use of the material in your course.

If you want to include printed materials as part of a course pack for your online course, the Cancopy agreement for Grant MacEwan College includes a step-by-step checklist of what can and cannot be copied for educational purposes under copyright law. The Cancopy agreement is available at <<http://www.lrc.gmcc.ab.ca/staff/cancopy/index.html>>. Contact the Bookstore Manager at (780) 497-5481 or <[pattenm@admin.gmcc.ab.ca](mailto:pattenm@admin.gmcc.ab.ca)> for more information about the Cancopy agreement or Kathleen Koch at 497-4350 or <[kochk@yeats.gmcc.ab.ca](mailto:kochk@yeats.gmcc.ab.ca)>

The Cancopy agreement does not extend, however, to printed materials that are scanned or otherwise published electronically. You will have to request permission to use printed materials in an electronic format from the publisher. Example: You have three articles that you want included in the content for module 4. These articles are not available through any online databases that you have access to but you want them in an online format for your course. You need to contact the publisher for each article to request permission to use it in an electronic format. See the sample letter under the Resource heading at the end of this section.

- Do I really need to worry about copyright infringement? Yes, you need to protect yourself against legal action that could be taken against you by copyright holders or their agents for infringing and as a member of the College community, you are obligated to honor the terms of agreement signed between the College and CAN-COPY, a Canadian copyright collective that acts on

**Resource** Yvonne Rezek, Web Services Librarian, provides support to faculty by providing customized education and training in the use of Web-based electronic resources. She also provides analysis of course content with respect to available library services as well as help in locating related online course material, evaluation of Web resources, and online library services for on and off campus students. Contact Yvonne at (780) 497-5885 or <[rezeky@yeats.gmcc.ab.ca](mailto:rezeky@yeats.gmcc.ab.ca)>.

**Resource** *Course Developer's Manual*, C. Wright – section 1.4 on Course Content. (Available at City Centre, Jasper Place and Millwoods LRC's, call number LB2361 .W75)

**Example** you have found a self-test that fits with the content in one of your course modules. You want to send your students to that site at the end of the module as a learning activity. The self-test is part of another course online that does not require users to login through a password. Unless the site includes a statement that grants unlimited use of the self-test, it is prudent in this case to ask the Web site author for permission to send your students to his or her site.

behalf of copyright holders. Copyright infringement is easier to prosecute in an online course than in a face-to-face classroom as the course material is published online.

## Copyright Permission Letter

A letter to the publisher requesting copyright permission should include the following information:

- Title, author, edition, copyright date and ISBN for material
- Exact number of pages being used and total number of pages being used from the work
- How the material is being used, such as for a course or distance course, online, etc.
- Approximate quantity materials will be reproduced (how many copies, students, etc.)
- Time frame (used for Fall semester, for 3 course offerings over next 2 years, etc.)

For an online course, it is appropriate to mention whether access to the course will be password protected, limited access to registered students only, how the material will be presented, such as a printed copy supporting an online course or as a pdf document within the course.

# Learning Activities

## Learning Activities Checklist

Here are some questions to review once you have developed learning activities for your course:

- Do the learning activities relate to the learning goals or outcomes?
- Do I have a variety of learning activities that can be done on or off the computer?
- Are my instructions for each activity clear?
- Have I included examples or suggestions to direct students how to complete the activities or assignments?
- Have I included instructions on how to submit assignments, including assignment format, such as submitting an assignment as a Word or Wordperfect document?
- Have I told students when and how they will receive feedback?

Learning activities engage the learner in the learning process. The learning activities discussed in this handbook are options that are facilitated by online learning technologies but are not intended to be a comprehensive list of learning activities. The term, learning activities, is used here to indicate any activities that assist students in learning the course content. These activities may be graded, given marks for completion rather than achievement, or may be included for the student's use to learn course material. More learning activities are included in the section of the handbook on Evaluation activities. The activities in that section typically are graded or given marks for completion.

**Example** Following a section of the course, include review questions focusing on the concepts or facts you want the students to know. Create a multiple-choice self-test at the end of the review section that includes suggested answers that will appear if the student selects the wrong answer. Monitor your students' progress through the self-test or quiz by tracking how often they completed the self-test and how well they did. Follow-up with an e-mail to the student or to the class as a whole with comments about some of the difficult concepts in that section or with alternative ways to understand the concepts.

In the description of the learning activities, each activity is related to learning objectives. The learning objectives used in this handbook are:

- Knowledge Objectives – What I want students to know
- Skill Objectives – What I want students to do
- Attitudes Objectives – What I want students to feel or think about a topic

The learning activities included here are meant only to provide options for you as you create and select course activities. Please use or adapt anything that you find useful in this section. The discussion activity is the most fully developed in this section as this is an activity that instructors teaching online at Grant MacEwan College have indicated a desire to learn more about.

This section of the handbook includes:

- A list of learning activities
- What each learning activity is
- How the learning activity relates to learning objectives
- How the learning activity can be facilitated or enhanced by online learning technologies.
- General tips

## Review questions

### Description:

In this learning activity, students answer questions based on the content they have recently reviewed.

### Purpose:

The student demonstrates their knowledge of the content by answering the questions and identifying which content areas need to be reviewed further. This activity relates to knowledge objectives.

### Suggestions for use online:

Online learning technologies facilitate review questions through self-tests. By answering self-test questions, students can get immediate feedback on their knowledge of the content and are able to re-use the self-test as often as they need to in order to learn it. Self-tests can be multiple-choice, matching or short answer format within course delivery software such as WebCT or TopClass.

## Essays/Reports

### Description:

Students answer questions which require them to include more information than in short answer questions, requiring them to organize and synthesize their knowledge.

### Purpose:

Students demonstrate knowledge, understanding, and synthesis of knowledge according to the essay/report assignment criteria. Essays or reports are related to knowledge and attitude objectives.

### Suggestions for use online:

Online learning technologies facilitate essay/report assignments in several ways.

- Enhanced writing process. Students can submit a draft of their work to their peers or the instructor for comments prior to handing the assignment in. This process is facilitated by the Comment feature in Word and Wordperfect word processors that allows a reader to insert comments at any point of the document. The comment location is highlighted and can be reviewed by moving the mouse over the highlighted section of text or clicking on the comment symbol. Comments can be edited or deleted. This feature allows readers to make comments “in the margins” rather than on a separate document. The Comment feature is found under the Insert pull-down menu in both Word and Wordperfect programs.
- Collaborative writing process. Students can work together on assignments, communicating through discussions lists/bulletin boards, by e-mail or by chat if they can agree on a meeting time. Instructors can monitor the group work process by visiting the discussion/bulletin board or by arranging for a chat time with the group members.
- Access to research resources. Instructors can encourage students to incorporate research resources into their paper by instructing them on how to access relevant resources through the LRC or through online resources.

**Example** Have students write brief papers on a course topic and submit their papers to the bulletin board/discussion list. Have students select one other paper to read. Then ask the students to write a brief response to the author of the paper they read. It could be a question, a comment, or a statement of agreement or disagreement. Students are marked on their original paper and on their participation in commenting on another paper.

**Resource** See the Paper or Project Prospectus and the Analytic Memos evaluation activities in the Evaluation section of the handbook for examples of how to structure essay/report assignments

**Example** There are several kinds of questions that can be asked, to guide your students' thinking about the course content. These questions include:

- **Description**—What did you see? What happened? What is the difference between...?
- **Reflection**—What was interesting? What was surprising?
- **Analogy**—What else does it remind you of? What else does it look like?
- **Common Purpose**—What is the purpose of...? What is the usual function of?
- **Procedures**—How was this done? What is the normal next step?
- **Possibilities**—What else could...? How could we...? If we didn't have..., what could...?
- **Theorizing**—Why is it that way? What is the reason for it?
- **Generalization**—What is the same about...and...? What could you generalize from these events? What principle is operating here?
- **Definition**—What does...mean? Define the word...?
- **Prediction**—What will happen next? What will you see? What will be the effect?
- **Justification**—How can you tell? What evidence led you to...?

## Discussion

### Description:

A group discussion is a collaborative way to share and build knowledge among a group of learners with a common learning context.

### Purpose:

Learners demonstrate increased awareness of complexity and enhanced understanding when they discuss the meaning of ideas and events with each other. Discussions are related to knowledge and attitude objectives. Research studies have shown that the more students explain ideas and examples to themselves and others, the more they understand. Discussions give students an opportunity to explain what they understand about ideas within the course and give instructors an opportunity to check on students' understanding of a topic. Instructors need to encourage student explanations as they work through the content without requiring finished reports of student knowledge.

### Suggestions for online use:

To be successful, groups need a common experience to draw them into participation, to establish a personal connection with the content, and provide a shared reference point from which to share their ideas. Group discussion requires a trigger, a starting point to initiate the group discussion process.

In online learning discussions are facilitated in synchronous (same time) and asynchronous (different time) ways. Same time or synchronous learning technologies that facilitate discussions include text-based chat rooms, audio- and video-conferencing. Asynchronous or different time learning technologies include e-mail, or computer conferencing.

Computer conferencing can include bulletin boards or discussion areas that allow users to post messages, reply to messages and organize previous messages allowing users to refer back to them. Marking student participation is facilitated by the discussion archive as all messages remain on the discussion list/bulletin board for the duration of the course.

**How do I start a discussion online?** Instructors should begin by welcoming students to the online discussion and congratulating them on having successfully entered the online course. The first message should invite the students to respond. Instructors should respond to the first message from each student in a friendly and timely manner. Unless students receive feedback, they will not continue to post messages.

A late start can affect a student's progress in the course. Instructors should ensure that all students have signed onto the course and have responded once within the first two weeks of the course. Students who have not communicated online should be contacted by direct e-mail or by telephone before the end of the second week.

Questions are a powerful way to initiate discussion and to create opportunities for learning. Questions open students' eyes to alternatives, erroneous assumptions, and eventualities they have not considered. They function to challenge students to develop a deeper understanding of their own knowledge.

**Once a discussion has begun, what do I do to keep it going?** When a learner contributes to the discussion or asks a question, an effective teacher responds without changing the topic to share his or her own information or perspective from a posture of mutual respect. A good discussion is one that leaves room for more than the right answer. One benefit of discussion is that it gives the instructor an opportunity to check on the learner's understanding of a topic and to broaden and deepen that understanding.

**What if no one participates?** Students may resist participating in an online discussion if they feel that the discussion activity is not a required part of the course. If including discussions in your course is important to you, ensure the students are given instructions about their responsibilities for participation and how that participation will be evaluated.

**How do I incorporate discussions into my online course?** One way to incorporate discussions within an online course is to schedule specific periods for discussions. By scheduling different discussions for each module or segment of the course, the instructor can notify students of the

**Tip** Putting a comment in the wrong discussion or a private e-mail into the course discussion is a common mistake. When this occurs, the message needs to be deleted from the inappropriate location and put where it belongs. One way to do this is to copy the message and mail it to the author with an explanation of why this is being done, then to delete it. The author will have a copy to edit and send to the correct recipient or discussion.

### Message guidelines

- In the subject line include one or more keywords that tell readers the focus of the message
- Limit message length to one or two screens. Longer messages should include a brief summary at the beginning and an indication of the length so readers can choose to print it to read
- A message should contain one point plus examples. If there are two points, there should be two separate messages

**Tip** Messages are informal communications – as long as the content is clear, minor grammar and typing problems can be ignored. For longer messages, it might be faster to compose using a word processor, run it through the spell checker and then copy and paste it into the e-mail or discussion list.

beginning and end of each discussion, so that students have time to contribute to the discussion while it is current.

### Should I give grades for participation in discussions?

Students may resist participation in online discussion, particularly if they see it as an activity that is extra to graded course activities. Several authors recommend assigning grades to discussion participation. (Harrasim et al., 1995). If participation in online discussions is a voluntary, ungraded activity, pragmatic students will not participate at all. Grades can be based upon frequency of contributions, the number and length of student messages, and deadlines. A suggested guideline for student participation is that students should participate at least three times a week; once to read course content and assignments, once to make their contribution to the class discussion and at least once to respond to contributions made by other students. If participation is less frequent than twice a week, the discussion can lag and students may become frustrated with the delay in receiving feedback from other students.

Ways an instructor can respond to student messages in a discussion list or bulletin board include:

- **Summaries** – When many comments have been made concerning a topic, the instructor needs to summarize them and focus the discussion that follows. A good summary message refers to specific ideas and information from previous comments. It identifies points of agreement and disagreement, supplies a unifying overview by interpreting the discussion, and gives the class a better sense of where they are going next. The comment may end with suggestions for further discussion of unresolved issues or it may indicate the end of that discussion topic and the beginning of a new topic.
- **Paraphrase** – Rephrase the underlying message the learner is sending in your own words, not the learner's words. Example: Student says, “I am confused, I still don't know what you want from me.” Paraphrase: “You see no way to start, huh?”
- **Parallel Personal Comment or Example Comment** Without changing the topic, talk about one's own current feelings or a past experience, or a current or past exam-

ple that matches exactly what the learner has said and provides further insight into the concept under discussion.

- **Leading Query on Learner's Topic** – Ask for clarification of aspects of the comment. Such responses include, “Could you elaborate or give an example?”, “Who can build on what she's saying?”
- **Provide More Information** – Include further information or suggest further sources to explore for more information.

## Case studies

### Description:

A case study is a factual account of human experience centered in a problem or issue faced by a person, group or organization. It can raise a variety of complex issues and stimulate discussions of alternative viewpoints. Typically, case studies are written objectively and include a brief overview of the situation, its context, and the major decisions that must be made.

### Purpose:

Learners develop their ability to articulate their thoughts, frame problems, generate solutions, and evolve principles that may apply to other situations. Case studies are useful in assisting students with the development of judgmental and diagnostic skills.

### Suggestions for use online:

Case studies can serve as a trigger for discussions, providing students with a common point of reference to compare their interpretations of the case study and their suggested solutions.

## Visual Studies

### Description:

A visual study is a direct depiction of a concept. Using pictures or video, a visual study can raise a variety of complex issues and stimulate discussions.

### Purpose:

Like case studies, visual studies give learners a common reference point to begin a discussion and aid learners in

**Example** Students read through a case study that is complete enough that they can define the problem, is open-ended, allowing for multiple interpretations, includes underlying value conflicts, and is related to the content of your course. Students complete follow-up questions that ask them to articulate their interpretation of the case and to support that interpretation. Students submit their assignments to the instructor who posts them onto the bulletin board/discussion list. Students are then required to read at least one other case study interpretation and respond.

**Resource** Visit the University of Tennessee, Teaching Resource Center Web site for a more detailed discussion of why and how to use case studies at <<http://ntlf.com/html/lib/faq/cs-utenn.htm>>

**Example** Students are asked to watch a video clip illustrating several concepts covered previously in an interpersonal relations and communications module. Students are then asked to analyze the video clip, by labeling the communication behaviors and explaining their role in the visual case study. Students are also asked to relate those communication behaviors to communication theories already covered in the course and to suggest different responses for the actors in the clip. Students submit the assignment to the instructor who develops some questions for discussion based on the students' work.

**Example** A clinical problem is posed to students, set in a common clinical context that requires them to actively process information, to use their prior knowledge, and provides opportunities for the students to elaborate on and organize their knowledge. The students work in pairs, communicating through e-mail or pre-arranged chat to develop a solution and to provide reasons why they feel their solution will address the problem. The instructor, after reading the submitted solutions, picks a couple to post to the class, so students can see good solutions that are well supported.

developing their ability to articulate their thoughts, frame problems, generate solutions, and evolve principles that may apply to other situations.

**Suggestions for use online:**

Visual studies can be facilitated through multimedia technologies, allowing students to view the visual study as many times as they need and then to answer review questions or to participate in a discussion.

## **Problem-based learning activities**

**Description:**

These are activities in which students identify issues raised by specific problems to help develop understanding about underlying concepts and principles. Students presented with a problem have two objectives: solution of the problem and learning related to the problem. Students use a range of resources to acquire knowledge required to solve the problem.

**Purpose:**

Problem-based learning activities require students to identify issues in the topic area, to identify areas in which they need to acquire more knowledge in order to solve the problem, and to apply their content knowledge to resolve the problem. These learning activities relate to knowledge and skill objectives as students are required to make use of their knowledge in order to solve the problem. Students demonstrate understanding and application of knowledge to an unfamiliar context or case. These learning activities promote the development of self assessment as a way to direct the learner to further learning, necessary for self-directed learners.

**Suggestions for use online:**

Problem-based learning activities are often used in training for health sciences professions but can also be used in any field in which students will have to apply principles and theories to complex or difficult situations. In the traditional approach to education, rules and principles are presented first. Students then apply these rules to clinical problems or examples. In a problem-based approach the order is reversed. Students tackle problems or examples first and in doing so discover the rules and principles for themselves.

This approach can be applied to any content in which the students need to develop a working, applied knowledge of a set of principles or rules. Students will need, however, clear instructions at the beginning of the exercise on what their objectives are, what resources they need to access, and what form the resolution of the problem will take.

## Examinations

### **Description:**

An examination is a common way to stimulate students to review course content.

### **Purpose:**

Completion, true-false, and multiple choice exams support memorization of facts and statements. Essay and short answer examinations support attaining an overall concept of the content. This learning activity relates to knowledge objectives, although depending on the kind of questions asked, can also relate to skill and attitude objectives.

### **Suggestions for Use Online:**

Both TopClass and WebCT have multiple choice, true-false, matching, short answer, and paragraph questions.

## Simulations

### **Description:**

A simulation is a learning activity that allows the student to practice skills and knowledge under conditions similar to the real situation the simulation emulates. It is a technology-facilitated way to learn by doing.

### **Purpose:**

Students practicing skills in a simulated environment can gain competencies prior to their engagement in a real situation. This learning activity relates to knowledge and skill objectives. Simulations are useful in assisting students with the development of judgmental and diagnostic skills.

### **Suggestions for Use Online:**

A simulation is facilitated through multimedia technologies that can produce a virtual object or environment that can be manipulated in ways similar to a real situation.

**Example** An audiometer simulation was created for the Hearing Aid Practitioner Program. The simulation allows students to set the controls on the audiometer and receive the appropriate sound and/or feedback as if they were working with the real piece of testing equipment. Exercises using the audiometer simulation includes content covering the audiometer functions and a self-test requiring students to enter the correct settings for testing situations.

**Tip** Instead of writing instructions such as:

*Read the article on corporate takeovers and write a two page analysis of the article.*

you might want to consider providing more detail about the kind of analysis you are expecting. The following instructions provide the student with more guidelines about what you expect them to do for the assignment.

*Read the article on corporate takeovers and write a two page, double-spaced analysis of the author's interpretation of the recent purchase of Canadian by Air Canada and what the implications of that event are for the Canadian air industry and Canadian consumers.*

*Although you are not required to cite other sources, you may want to include some information from the readings in modules 2 and 3.*

## Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a concern in online courses as information can be copied and pasted directly into student papers or existing papers can be downloaded and submitted as original work. The following suggestions on how to recognize and reduce online plagiarism is reproduced from a Web site, How Can I Prevent Plagiarism? available at <http://alexia.lis.uiuc.edu/~janicke/plagiary.htm>

### How Can I Reduce Plagiarism?

- Emphasize the processes involved in doing research and writing papers. Ways to do so include requiring topic proposals, idea outlines, multiple drafts, interim working bibliographies, and photocopies of sources.
- Require students to engage and apply ideas, not just describe them.
- Require students to reflect personally on the topic or the processes of research and writing, either in the paper or as an additional writing assignment.
- Discuss plagiarism with students, both what it is and your policies about it.

### How Can I Detect Plagiarism?

- Check for unusual formatting or formatting that does not match what you require. In particular, check for Web site printout page numbers or dates, grayed out letters and unusual use of upper/lower case and capitalization.
- Notice any jargon or advanced vocabulary or sentence structure.
- Read quotations carefully. Do they sound like a quote from an interview? Are there quotes without bibliographic entries?
- Reference the original assignment. Are any portions of the assignment completely left out? Do any portions read like they were “added on” to the paper? Is it the

correct type of paper, e.g. descriptive, position, first person, narrative?

- Review the bibliography. Is the correct citation style used? Is the citation style used consistently? Does it match the sources referenced in the paper? Are there many items that the academic institution's library does not have?

## Resources

### Digital Integrity

<http://www.findsame.com/>

This website allows you to search for a block of text and is useful in tracking down sections of text if you suspect a student has inappropriately copied and pasted it into his or her work.

Wright, C. (1987) *Course Developer's Manual*. Grant MacEwan Community College. (City Centre, Jasper and Millwoods LRC's call number LB 2361.W75) This manual is a practical guide written for Grant MacEwan instructors who are developing a course. The manual is intended for instructors who are writing a print, module-based distance course, however, it provides a good guide on how to structure and organize a course regardless of course format.

- The Learning Resource Center (LRC) can help students find and access resources. All students and faculty are encouraged to use the resources available at the LRC Web site at <<http://www.lrc.gmcc.ab.ca>>. Distance students may also go to the Distance Learning link for specific distance learning information and book and article request forms. Students and faculty need a validated student or staff ID card with a 13 digit bar code number in order to access many LRC services. Call 497-5850 or 1-800-565-4824 to obtain a validated ID card. A virtual reference service is available through the Ask a Question link on the LRC home page. Research questions will be answered within 48 hours. Marlene Baltare assists in research and delivery of library resources for distance students. She can be contacted at 497-5858 or <[baltarem@yeats.gmcc.ab.ca](mailto:baltarem@yeats.gmcc.ab.ca)>.

## General Tips

- Consider including a mix of assignments that can be completed online and away from the computer. Some students may not be able to work on all of the course sitting in front of a computer. Assignments and activities that allow the student to print out instructions and work away from the computer may help your students make better use of their time when they can work online.
- Consider providing an example of what you want for an assignment. Students may require more detailed instructions than you think are necessary for online assignments. Instead of telling students to go to a Web site and then complete review questions, consider telling them what headings or links within the site you want them to look at. Students have reported spending much more time on Web-based resources for assignments than instructors intended them to because they found a large amount of relevant information and were unsure what they should focus on.

**Resources** Web Sites on  
Online Plagiarism:

- Western Illinois University  
<<http://www.wiu.edu/users/mfbhl/wiu/plagiarism.htm>>
- Indiana University Writing Resources  
<<http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html>>

- Summary of Best Practices in College Teaching by Tom Drummond, North Seattle Community College  
<<http://nscx.sccd.ctc.edu/~eceprog/bstprac.html>>  
This site is a good listing of teaching and learning practices centered on classroom based teaching but applicable to other delivery formats.
- Tips to facilitate critical thinking in your classroom (Sonoma State University)  
<<http://www.criticalthinking.org/K12/k12class/tsrecom.ncl>>. This site is a listing of practical tips to incorporate critical thinking into your teaching practice. Although it is focused on classroom teaching, the tips are applicable to other teaching contexts.
- The Online Report on Pedagogical Techniques for Computer-Mediated Communication By Morten Flate Paulsen  
<<http://www.nettskolen.com/forskning/19/cmcped.html>>. This site from Norway lists and describes several techniques to use online communication for learning activities. He breaks the techniques into the number of participants for each technique: one-alone, one-to-one, one-to-many and many-to-many. His discussion is from a university, research-based perspective and does not include practical tips on how to use the techniques but is a systematic listing of different online learning activities.
- Ted Panitz's Cooperative Learning page  
<<http://www.capecod.net/~tpanitz/tedspage>>. Ted is a professor of math in an eastern American college and has put together a variety of resources focusing on cooperative learning. This site includes a cooperative learning e-book and a WAC e-book containing a variety of writing assignments. His writing assignments are targeted at in-class teaching contexts but can be adapted to an online environment.

# Evaluation

## Evaluation Checklist

Here are some questions to review once you have developed the evaluation activities for your course:

- Do the evaluation activities relate to the learning goals or outcomes for the course?
- Are my instructions for each assignment or exam clear?
- Have I included examples or suggestions to direct students how to complete assignments?
- Have I included instructions on how to submit assignments, including assignment format, such as submitting an assignment as a Word or Wordperfect document?
- Have I told students when and how they will receive feedback?

Evaluation activities include activities within the course that provide the instructor with information on how well the students have learned course content and/or achieved learning objectives. In the case of formative evaluations, instructors identify the content or skill areas that students still need to work on. Although evaluation of student knowledge and competencies is typically associated with assigning grades, informal or supplementary assessment activities can also provide quick feedback to the instructor on what areas need to be focused on.

This section of the handbook includes:

- A list of evaluation techniques
- A description of each technique including its purpose, suggestions for use, a step-by-step procedure, and ideas on how to make use of the evaluation information
- Suggestions on what to do or avoid doing when using this technique

**Resource** Angelo, T. A. & Cross, K. P. (1993) *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. (Available at LRC City Centre Campus: call number LB 2822.75.A54 1993)

Grant MacEwan College  
Online Course Evaluation  
Form

An evaluation form template is available at:

<http://www.gmcc.ab.ca/nw/hcs/webct/form.html>

**Note** These assessment techniques have been adapted for use in online courses and are based on the techniques found in the book, *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers* by Thomas A. Angelo and K. Patricia Cross, 2nd edition, 1993. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco. Adapted by permission of Jossey-Bass, Inc., a subsidiary of John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

The assessment techniques listed below are meant to supplement traditional, summative forms of evaluation such as examinations and final or term projects. These formative, less formal assessment techniques can reduce the uncertainty that instructors and students feel as they face midterms, final examinations, and the calculation of course grades.

Angelo and Cross, make some suggestions to begin using assessment techniques successfully:

1. If an assessment technique does not appeal to your intuition and professional judgement as teacher, don't use it.
2. Don't make assessment into a self-inflicted chore or burden. Start small. Select one assessment activity to assess a learning goal that you feel already works fairly well. Build on the feedback you get from the students.
3. Don't ask your students to use any assessment technique you haven't previously tried on yourself.
4. Allow for more time than you think you will need to carry out and respond to the assessment.
5. Make sure to "close the loop". Let students know what you learn from their feedback and how you and they can use that information to improve learning.
6. Don't use an assessment technique to ask for student feedback if you are not willing to consider changing how you teach that section of the course or if you are not prepared to deal with the sort of feedback you may receive.

## Assessing Prior Knowledge, Recall, and Understanding

### Focused Listing

#### Description:

This technique focuses students' attention on a single important term, name, or concept from a particular lesson and directs them to list several ideas that are closely related to that "focus point."

**Purpose:**

Focused Listing is a tool for quickly determining what learners recall as the most important points related to a particular topic. It can help instructors assess how well students can describe or define a central point in a lesson, and it can begin to illuminate the web of concepts that students connect with that point. Practicing this technique can help students learn to focus attention and improve recall.

**Suggestions for Use:**

Focused Listing can be used before, during, or after the relevant lesson. As a result, instructors can use this technique to measure the class's progress in learning one specific element of the course content. It can be used relatively frequently in courses where a large amount of new information is regularly introduced.

**Step-By-Step Procedure:**

1. Select an important topic or concept that the class has just studied or is about to study and describe it in a word or brief phrase.
2. Write that word or phrase at the top of a document as the heading for a Focused List or related terms important to understanding that topic.
3. Set a limit on the number of items you will write – five to ten items are usually sufficient.
4. Adhering to your own limits, make a list of important words and phrases you can recall that are related to and subsumed by your heading.
5. Look over your list quickly, adding any important items you may have left out.
6. If you are still convinced that the topic is important and well defined, give your students the same focus topic, tell them the length limits and ask them to make a Focused List.

**Ideas on how to use this Technique:**

Provide students with the focus topic along with their assignment and ask them to complete the Focused List and submit it.

**Notes**

Make sure that both the task and the limits are clear and that students know if you expect them to apply any particular criteria in generating their lists, such as listing only defining words, synonyms, or examples.

Focus on a term or concept so important that you want students to remember it three years after the course is over.

Always work through this technique yourself before using it in your course. Make sure you have your own Focused List ready.

**Note** Many students are both surprised and relieved to learn that they are not alone in being mistaken or unclear about a given topic. The feedback session can provide that reassurance.

Make your Focused List available to the students on the bulletin board or discussion list for comparison and to elicit questions and discussions.

Make a follow-up list that combines the best of the students' lists with your own and post it on the discussion list. This activity provides students with an opportunity to think about what is most important to learn, know, and remember about that topic.

Use Focused Listing again at intervals after the first time. It then becomes a technique not only for assessing longer-term recall but also for reinforcing and deepening learning and encouraging restructuring of knowledge.

## **Misconception/Preconception Check**

### **Description:**

The Misconception/Preconception Check focuses on uncovering prior knowledge or beliefs that may hinder or block further learning.

### **Purpose:**

The greater obstacle to new learning often is not the student's lack of prior knowledge but, rather, the existence of prior knowledge. Instructors can benefit from discovering early in the term which common misconceptions and preconceptions students have that are likely to interfere with their learning in a given course. This technique is designed to uncover specific instances of incorrect or incomplete knowledge, attitudes, or values that represent likely barriers to new learning. Because assessment activities such as this identify misconceptions and preconceptions early on and help students explicitly recognize and understand them, students stand a much greater chance of learning new material correctly and integrating it into their "revised" and often "transformed" knowledge structures.

### **Suggestions for Use:**

Although there are common misperceptions or preconceptions about every field, they seem to be most common in those areas of the curriculum that have the greatest overlap with life outside the classroom. This technique can be particularly useful in dealing with controversial or sensitive issues.

### **Step-By-Step Procedure:**

1. Start by identifying some of the most troublesome common misconceptions or preconceptions students bring to your course. Brainstorming this question with colleagues in your department can be an effective way to generate such a list.
2. Select a handful of these troublesome ideas and beliefs - ones that are likely to interfere most with learning in your course – and focus your Misconception/Preconception Check on them.
3. Create a simple questionnaire to elicit information about students' ideas and beliefs in these areas. A multiple-choice format in WebCT and TopClass can be adapted to include a Likert-scale response if you need to know how strongly held the beliefs or ideas are.
4. Have a colleague read your questions to make sure they do not seem patronizing, threatening, or obvious.
5. Before giving the questionnaire to your students, think through how you will respond to several likely outcomes. Remove any questions or topics you do not feel prepared to deal with.
6. Explain your reasons for using this technique to the students and announce when and how you plan to respond to their feedback. Give a summary of the students responses back to the students – use that summary as a discussion trigger.

### **Ideas on how to use this Technique:**

To encourage candid responses to sensitive topics, begin by asking students to identify common misconceptions and preconceptions that they think other people have about the topic.

Re-administer the same questionnaire later in the term - after your instructional response – to see what, if anything, has changed and how.

### **Notes**

When students do explicitly recognize and question their own knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes, they gain a measure of control over their own thinking. This technique can help students take one small step in the direction of self-knowledge and self-awareness.

The most obvious disadvantage of this technique is that virtually no one enjoys having his or her certainties questioned. Unlearning, though often necessary, can be very difficult. Tread lightly when dealing with potentially sensitive issues if you want students to open up enough to risk having their assumptions challenged. In general, do not use this technique to focus on issues that students may find personally threatening until a climate of trust and civility has been established in the course.

## Notes

Feedback on responses gives important direction and useful models to less experienced students.

Empty Outlines can help students better organize and more effectively reorganize their memories of the material they are learning.

The Empty Outline can be used to demonstrate the basic organizing schemes of the discipline and to give students practice in using these schemes.

Don't try to assess too much at any one time. If there are twenty main points in the module you are focusing on, for example, use the Empty Outline to assess understanding of only one-third or half of that material.

## Empty Outlines

### Description:

The instructor provides students with an empty or partially completed outline of an assignment and has them fill in the blank spaces. This technique helps students better organize and learn course content.

### Purpose:

The Empty Outline technique helps instructors find out how well students have “caught” the important part of the course module, reading or other presentation of content. It also helps learners recall and organize the main points of a lesson within an appropriate knowledge structure, making retention more likely and aiding understanding.

### Suggestions for Use:

This technique works best in courses where a large amount of content – facts and principles – is presented regularly in a highly structured manner. For example, Empty Outlines have been used with success in introductory courses in physical and life sciences, nursing, and law. The technique can be used at the conclusion of a lesson. You can use this as a self-study exercise or as a short answer quiz.

### Step-By-Step Procedure:

1. Create an outline of the lesson, discussion, or reading you want to focus on.
2. Make conscious decisions about the level on which, you will focus the Empty Outline and, thus, the students' attention. Do you want students to supply the main topics, the main subtopics, or the supporting details? These decisions will determine what information you supply in the form and what you leave out.
3. If your Empty Outline focuses on a presentation or discussion, make sure that your own notes reflect any important changes that may have occurred between what was scripted and what actually happened.
4. Let students know how much time they should spend completing the outlines and the kinds of responses you prefer — words, short phrases or brief sentences.

5. Be sure to announce the purpose of the assessment and the time when the students will receive feedback on their responses. If you are using this as a self-study technique, you may want to ask students in the class discussion list or bulletin board to share their answers or to discuss problems they encountered.

**Ideas for using the Technique:**

If students have a great deal of difficulty completing the Empty Outline, try providing the class with a jumbled list of headings and subheadings and letting them structure the outline by using that content. Provide main headings but not subheadings; at other times, list the subheadings or details and ask students to fill in the main points.

**Minute Paper****Description:**

The Minute Paper provides a quick and simple way to collect written feedback on student learning. After completing a section or module, the instructor asks students to respond briefly to some variation of the following two questions: “What was the most important thing you learned during this section?” and “What important question remains unanswered?” Students write their responses and submit them by e-mail.

**Purpose:**

The great advantage of Minute Papers is that they provide manageable amounts of timely and useful feedback for a minimal investment of time and energy. By asking students what they see as the most significant things they are learning, and what their major questions are, instructors can quickly check how well those students are learning what they are teaching. That feedback can help instructors decide whether any mid-course corrections or changes are needed and, if so, what kinds of instructional adjustments to make. Getting the instructor's feedback on their Minute Papers helps students learn how experts in a given discipline distinguish the major points from the details. The Minute Paper also ensures that students' questions will be raised, and in many cases answered, in time to facilitate further learning.

**Notes**

Minute Papers are effective where many issues and questions have limited life spans and time is always in short supply.

If Minute Papers are overused or poorly used, students will begin to view the technique as a gimmick or an exercise in polling. Not all learning experiences can be meaningfully assessed by an instrument that asks learners to note significant points or remaining questions.

## Notes

To temper expectations and prevent individual disappointment, let the class know in advance that you may not be able to comment on every important point and question submitted. It is often wise to promise less feedback than you think you can deliver. Let students know in advance, for example, that you will respond to the three most commonly raised points and questions from their Minute Papers, even though you hope to do more.

Responding to Minute Papers often takes longer than planned, because questions lead to further questions. Build in some flexibility but set clear limits for the time you will spend on feedback.

Initially, a number of students may have difficulty explaining, or even naming, what it is that they don't understand. Becoming effective self-assessors takes time and practice, and you may not wish to develop that skill during the course.

Despite its simplicity, the Minute Paper assesses more than mere recall. To select the most important or significant information, learners must first evaluate what they recall. Then, to come up with a question, students must self-assess - asking themselves how well they understand what they have just studied.

### Suggestions for Use:

Minute Papers can be used to assess what students have learned from a discussion, content presentation, lab session, study-group meeting, field trip, homework assignment, video clip, or exam. Minute Papers work well at the end or beginning of a module, serving either as warm-up or wrap-up activities. Minute Papers can be used frequently in courses that regularly present students with a great deal of new information.

### Step-By-Step Procedure:

1. Decide first what you want to focus on and, as a consequence, when to administer the Minute Paper. If you want to focus on students' understanding of the module content, at the end of the module may be the best time. If your focus is on a prior assignment, the beginning of the module may be more appropriate.
2. Using the two basic questions from the "Description" above as starting points, write Minute Paper prompts that fit your course and students. Try out your Minute Paper on a colleague before using it in the course.
3. Plan to discuss the results of the technique later in the course.
4. Let students know how much time they should spend answering the question (two to four minutes per question is usually enough), what kinds of answers you want (words, phrases, or short sentences), and when they can expect your feedback.

### Ideas for using the Technique:

Simply tabulating the responses and making note of any useful comments is often all the analysis needed. Consider saving Minute Papers from early in the term to compare with responses at midterm and later. Comparing responses over time can allow you to see changes and development in

the clarity of student writing and thoughtfulness of answers.

Use only half of the Minute Paper. That is, ask students either for the most important point(s) or for their question(s). A variation of the Minute Paper is the Muddiest Point in which you ask students to respond to the question, “What was the muddiest point in the module, discussion, assignment, presentation?”

Have students submit their Minute Papers to the class bulletin board/discussion list. Assign different students the task of analyzing and presenting the results to the class. Rotate the assignment as part of the students' participation marks.

## **Assessing Skills in Analysis and Critical Thinking**

### **Analytic Memos**

#### **Description:**

The Analytic Memo requires students to write a one or two page analysis of a specific problem or issue. The person for whom the memo is being written is usually identified as an employer, a client, or a stakeholder who needs the student's analysis to inform decision making.

#### **Purpose:**

Analytic Memos assess students' ability to analyze assigned problems by using the discipline-specific approaches, methods, and techniques they are learning. This technique also assesses students' skill at communicating their analyses in a clear and concise manner. This short, structured writing assignment provides high-quality feedback on students' analytic and writing skills as a by-product of an intellectually challenging and realistic skill-building exercise.

#### **Suggestions for Use:**

Analytic Memos are particularly useful in disciplines that clearly relate to public policy or management, such as political science, economics, criminal justice, social work, education, environmental studies, management and public health. This technique works best when used early in the

## Notes

Analytic Memos are valuable, realistic, and substantial learning exercises in themselves; they build and sharpen skills, in addition to providing feedback for assessment.

To get good feedback with this technique, choose a problem that is both real enough and rich enough to generate thoughtful analysis.

Students may resist investing their time and energy in an exercise that will not be graded. You may need to offer students some course credit for successfully completing the Analytic Memos, even though they will not be graded, in order to motivate them to do a good job.

term, as a means to help students prepare for later graded memo-writing assignments. Because preparing and assessing the Analytic Memos takes quite a bit of time and effort, this technique is best suited to seminars and small classes.

## Step-By-Step Procedure:

1. Determine which analytic methods or techniques you wish to assess.
2. Locate or invent an appropriate, well-focused, and typical problem or situation for the students to analyze. Get background information on the problem or invent some plausible information.
3. Specify who is writing the memo and for whom it is being written, as well as its subject and purpose.
4. Write your own Analytic Memo on the subject. Keep track of any difficulties you have in writing the memo and note how long it takes you from start to finish. Ask yourself whether it really required the type of analysis you were hoping to assess and whether you found it an informative and instructive exercise.
5. Decide whether you want students to work alone, in pairs, or in small groups.
6. Develop an explicit, half-page directions sheet for your students. Specify the students' role, the identify of the audience, the specific subject to be addressed, the basic analytic approach to be taken, the length limit (usually one or two pages) and the assignment deadline.
7. Explain to students how this assessment can help prepare them for subsequent course assignments and for their careers.

## Ideas for using the Technique:

The basic challenge in analyzing Analytic Memos is to extract useful information while severely limiting the amount of time and energy you spend. Devise a short checklist of three to five major points to look for in each memo and limit yourself to just those points. For example, you might want

to evaluate your students' Analytic Memos for content, the breadth of the analysis and the quality of the information; skill (the skill with which the relevant tools or methods were employed in the analysis); and writing (clarity, conciseness, appropriateness of format, and overall writing quality). Make up a simple grid on which you can check off "Well done," "Acceptable," "Needs work" for each of the major points you focus on as you read. If you must write comments, limit yourself to two or three very specific ones.

Use the Analytic Memo as the first draft of a graded memo-writing assignment.

Divide the class into "policy analysts" and "policy makers"; then have the policy makers respond, in memo format, to the policy analysts memos.

## **Word Journal**

### **Description:**

The Word Journal prompts a two-part response. First, the student summarizes a short text in a single word. Second, the student writes a paragraph or two explaining why he or she chose that particular word to summarize the text. The completed response to the Word Journal is an abstract or a synopsis of the focus text.

### **Purpose:**

The Word Journal can help instructors assess and improve several related skills. First, it focuses on students' ability to read carefully and deeply. Second, it assesses skill and creativity at summarizing what has been read. And third, it assesses the students' skill at explaining and defending, in just a few more words, their choice of single summary word. Practice with this technique helps students develop the ability to write highly condensed abstracts and to "chunk" large amounts of information for more effective storage in long-term memory. These skills are useful in almost any field, particularly the professions.

### **Suggestions for Use:**

The Word Journal works wherever students are expected to read carefully and thoughtfully – to understand concepts, not simply to memorize information. It works especially well

## Notes

The Word Journal requires students to read deeply and to construct meaning from what they had read. It promotes active learning through reading.

The act of choosing a single word to sum up a reading, and then explaining and advocating for that word, encourages students to make personal connections with the texts they are reading and to take responsibility for their ideas.

This is not an effective technique to use in cases where there is only one acceptable way to summarize a given text. The Word Journal works only when students have the freedom to explore and express their own interpretations.

Unless students have opportunities to discuss and compare their responses, they will benefit relatively little from the assessment.

in courses that focus on primary texts rather than textbooks. This technique can easily be adapted for use in courses in literature, anthropology, sociology, criminal justice, history, management and law. Because of the extreme condensation required to summarize a reading in one word, however, this technique is best used to assess the reading of short texts, such as essays, poems, short stories, short articles, and cases.

### Step-By-Step Procedure:

1. Choose one of the short texts that your students will be assigned to read.
2. Decide what aspect of that text – main theme, central conflict or problem, core metaphor – you want the students to focus on.
3. To determine whether the exercise is feasible and productive, try following your own directions.
4. If you find the Word Journal process thought-provoking, prepare to explain and administer the technique in your course.
5. Tell the students that the choice of a specific word is less important than the quality of the explanation for that choice. Give them some ideas about what their explanations should contain, and inform them that the words they choose must be connected to their interpretations of the text.

### Ideas for using the Technique:

Before you collect responses to the Word Journal, take a few minutes to come up with your own list of reasonable “summary words” for the assigned text. Jot down some notes about the kinds of arguments and analyses you hope students will offer in defence of their word choices. As you read the journals, keep track of words that are used by more than one student, or related terms that crop up. Pay close attention to the justifications that students give for their word choices. When possible, categorize Word Journal responses not only by the summary words but also by the types of explanations offered. After analyzing the responses, select examples of three or four different approaches that you can share with the class.

If you believe that your students will find this technique too challenging at first, begin by providing them with a list of possible words to choose from. Their task will be to select a word from that list and then to justify that choice.

## **Assessing Skill in Problem Solving**

### **Problem Recognition Tasks**

#### **Description:**

Problem Recognition Tasks presents students with a few examples of common problem types. The students' task is to recognize and identify the particular type of problem each example represents.

#### **Purpose:**

In many fields, students learn a variety of problem-solving methods, but they often have difficulty determining which kinds of problems are best solved by which methods. Problem Recognition Tasks help instructors assess how well students can recognize various problem types, the first step in matching problem type to solution method. As students work through this technique, they practice thinking generally about problems they often view as individual, isolated examples. This practice helps them develop a valuable diagnostic skill.

#### **Suggestions for Use:**

Problem Recognition Tasks lend themselves naturally to quantitative and technical fields in which students learn a variety of specific problem-solving techniques or methods. But this technique can also be applied to fields in which students learn more general problem-solving approaches, such as policy analysis, nursing, medicine, law and counselling.

#### **Step-By-Step Procedure:**

1. Choose examples of several different, but related problem types that students find difficult to distinguish. Make sure that each example illustrates one and only one type of problem.
2. Decide whether you will provide information about the

## Notes

The Problem Recognition Task is a quick, simple way to assess students' diagnostic skills. It focuses student attention on correctly recognizing and diagnosing problems first, rather than immediately trying to solve them.

By helping students make connections between the specific and general levels of problem solving, this technique shows them how to apply the problem-solving skills they are learning to new and unfamiliar situations.

This is a skill that many students have not been explicitly taught. Therefore, you may have to demonstrate problem recognition and provide practice in this skill before you can assess students in any meaningful way.

types of problems that students are to recognize, allowing them simply to match type with example, or whether you will ask students to name the problem types as well.

3. Try out your examples on a colleague or an advanced student to see whether he or she agrees with your choice of examples. This run-through can also help you assess the difficulty of the task and the time that it will take to complete.
4. Make up a short Problem Recognition Task document containing a handful of example problems for students to recognize.

### **Ideas for using the Technique:**

In most cases, you can quickly scan the responses and tally the number of correct and incorrect answers for each problem.

Allow small groups of students to work together to respond to the Problem Recognition Task. Group work is especially valuable for students who are just learning diagnosis or in classes where there are wide variations in skill levels. Group work can be facilitated asynchronously through separate bulletin boards/discussion lists or can be facilitated through pre-arranged chat times with each group in a separate chat room.

Ask students to explain, in detail, what distinguishes the different types of problems and what clues an expert would seek to distinguish them quickly.

### **What's the Principle?**

#### **Description:**

After students figure out what type of problem they are dealing with, they often must then decide what principle or principles to apply in order to solve the problem. This technique focuses on the second step in problem solving. It provides students with a few problems and asks them to state the principle that best applies to each problem.

**Purpose:**

This technique assesses students' ability to associate specific problems with the general principles used to solve them. Responses to this technique tell faculty whether students understand how to apply basic principles of the discipline. What's the Principle? helps students recognize the general types of problems they can solve with particular principles, rather than merely learning how to solve individual problems.

**Suggestions for Use:**

What's the Principle? is an easy assessment to use in any course where students learn rules or principles of practice, however precise or imprecise those principles may be.

**Step-By-Step Procedure:**

1. Identify the basic principles that you expect students to learn in your course. Make sure to focus only on those that students have been taught.
2. Find or create sample problems or short examples that illustrate each of these principles. Each example should illustrate only one principle.
3. Create a What's the Principle? form that includes a listing of the relevant principles and specific examples or problems for students to match those principles.
4. Try out your assessment on a colleague to make certain it is not too difficult or too time-consuming to use in your course.
5. After you have made any necessary revisions to the form, apply the assessment. This assessment activity could be made into a self-test.

**Ideas for using the Technique:**

What's the Principle? forms should be very easy and quick to score. Simply tally the number of right and wrong answers, and note patterns in the specific wrong answers given. If you find lots of wrong answers and no sensible patterns, students are probably guessing.

**Notes**

Use of this technique promotes the learning of transferable problem-solving skills that students may remember long after they have forgotten specific examples. This technique is a simple, quick way to get useful information on a complex skill: recognizing general principles embodied in or violated by specific examples.

This assessment usually does not work well with raw beginners, because they have not seen enough examples and worked through enough problems to generalize effectively.

Provide students with only the principles, and ask them to come up with good and bad examples of applications.

Give students only the examples, and assess their ability to recall important principles, as well as to apply them.

Follow up by asking students to justify each of their choices of principles in a sentence or two.

## Assessing Skill in Application and Performance

### Directed Paraphrasing

#### Description:

In many fields, success depends on one's ability to translate highly specialized information into language that clients or customers will understand. Directed Paraphrasing is an assessment technique designed to assess and help develop that valuable skill. In this technique, students are directed to paraphrase part of a lesson for a specific audience and purpose, using their own words.

#### Purpose:

On the simplest level, Directed Paraphrasing provides feedback on students' ability to summarize and restate important information or concepts in their own words; it therefore allows instructors to assess how well students have understood and internalized that learning. At the same time, this technique assesses the students' ability to translate that learning into a form that someone outside the course can understand. The fact that the paraphrase is "directed," aimed at a specific audience for a specific reason, makes the paraphrasing task more demanding and more useful than simple paraphrasing.

#### Suggestions for Use:

Directed Paraphrasing is particularly useful for assessing the students' understanding of important topics or concepts that they will later be expected to explain to others. For example, in fields such as social work, public health, education, law and criminal justice, much of a student's eventual

### Notes

This technique must be used more than once during the course if students as well as the instructor are to learn from the process. The paraphrasing skills of some students will not improve appreciably unless the instructor provides some focused, individualized feedback. This is a rather time-intensive technique.

Students' first efforts are likely not to look much like their own words; after all, most students have had many years of practice in not writing in their own words.

success depends on his or her ability to internalize specialized and often complex information and then to communicate it effectively to the public. Specifying the audiences for the paraphrases can be particularly useful, since students can practice paraphrasing for their likely future clients. The more authentic the audience, the more useful the Directed Paraphrase.

### **Step-By-Step Procedure:**

1. Select an important theory, concept or argument that students have studied in some depth. This should be a topic with some implications outside the course.
2. Determine who would be a realistic yet challenging audience for a paraphrase of this topic, what the purpose of such a paraphrase should be, and how long – in number of written words – the Directed Paraphrase should be. If your students are well prepared in the material and/or experienced in the field, direct them to paraphrase the same topic for two very different audiences.
3. Try responding to the Directed Paraphrase yourself, to see how realistic the assignment is. Can you write an effective paraphrase within the limits given?
4. Direct the students to prepare a paraphrase of the chosen topic. Tell them who the intended audience is, what the purpose is, and what the limits are on the number of words or sentences.

### **Ideas for using the Technique:**

Separate the student responses into four groups, which might be labelled “confused,” “minimal,” “adequate,” and “excellent.” Then assess the responses by comparing them within and across categories. Pay particular attention to three characteristics of the response: the accuracy of the paraphrase, its suitability for the intended audience, and its effectiveness in fulfilling the assigned purpose.

Have different students paraphrase different reading assignments and then ask them to share those paraphrases with the other students.

## Notes

When students get feedback on their Applications Cards, they benefit from hearing the best examples. Many times, students learn more from each other's examples of applications than from the teacher's or the textbook's examples.

Students who come up with poor or incorrect applications are likely to remember and learn those bad examples unless they receive feedback and examples of good applications. Follow-up is critical.

Provide students with examples of particularly successful paraphrases.

Give each student a checklist of the strong and weak points of his or her response.

## Applications Cards

### Description:

After students have read about an important principle, generalization, theory, or procedure, the student is asked to write down at least one possible, real-world application for what they have just learned.

### Purpose:

Applications Cards let instructors know how well students understand the possible applications of what they have learned. This technique prompts students to think about possible applications and, as a consequence, to connect newly learned concepts with prior knowledge. As they respond to the technique, students also see more clearly the possible relevance of what they are learning.

### Suggestions for Use:

This technique can be used in almost any course. It is often used in the social sciences, pre-professional studies and vocational and technical education.

### Step-By-Step Procedure:

1. Identify an important and clearly applicable principle, theory, generalization, or procedure that your students are studying or have just studied.
2. Decide how many applications you will ask for and how much time you will suggest students take to complete the assessment. One application is often enough.
3. Remind students that the point is to come up with their own applications, not to repeat applications they have read in the text.
4. Have students submit their Applications Cards by e-mail and let students know when they will get feedback.

**Ideas for using the Technique:**

Usually you will be able to tell right away (1) whether the applications are accurate and (2) how reasonable, useful, or creative the applications are. Pick out three to five of the best applications – choose as broad a range of examples as possible to share with the class.

Encourage students to keep an “applications journal” in their notes. Suggest that they devote two minutes at the end of every module or at any other appropriate time, to writing possible applications of what they are studying at that point.

Not all applications are equally desirable; some may be dangerous, unethical, or immoral. Therefore, in some courses, you may want to use Applications Card responses as a starting point for discussions of the possible consequences of various applications.

**Paper or Project Prospectus****Description:**

A prospectus is a brief, structured first-draft plan for a term paper. The Paper Prospectus prompts students to think through elements of the assignment, such as the topic, purpose, intended audience, major questions to be answered, basic organization, and time and resources required. The Project Prospectus, on the other hand, may focus on tasks to be accomplished, skills to be improved, and products to be developed.

**Purpose:**

The Paper or Project Prospectus assesses students’ skill at synthesizing what they have already learned about a topic or field as they plan their own learning projects. In addition, this technique can give the instructor valuable information about the students’ understanding of both the assignment and the topic – as well as their planning skills – before it is too late to make suggestions and shape direction. Students benefit from writing a prospectus because they receive feedback before they begin substantive work on the papers or projects they have been assigned. This early feedback makes it less likely that the instructor or the students will be disappointed by the finished product.

## Notes

The Paper or Project Prospectus is a device that finds its own level. It can be as simple or as elaborate as the assigned project requires. It has immediate relevance to the students' work, concerns, and questions about the course. At the same time, it provides practice in a valuable and transferable skill.

This technique gives instructors both a preview of the students' interests and ideas and a forewarning of their problems and questions, allowing for timely and helpful feedback. This preview of the final products also makes it easier for teachers to evaluate them effectively when they are completed.

The directions should make it clear that a prospectus is a plan and so may be discussed, adjusted, reworked, or even totally scrapped. Encourage students to take some risks, to propose something they really are excited about doing.

## Suggestions for Use:

This technique is appropriate for any course that required students to write term papers or to carry out substantial projects. In social sciences and humanities courses, it can be used to give students feedback on their planned term papers. In fields such as social work, education, counselling psychology, and recreation, instructors can employ the prospectus to help students plan internship and fieldwork projects.

The Paper or Project Prospectus is most helpful to students and instructors when it is used several weeks before the assignment is due. In fact, it is best to use this technique immediately after the paper or project is assigned, so that there will be adequate time for analysis and feedback.

## Step-By-Step Procedure:

1. Determine the general outline of the term paper or project assignment for which the students will write the prospectus. Write a clear and informative first-draft assignment document for students. These general directions should tell students how much freedom they have in determining the topic, form, content, purpose, audience, etc. The assignment document should also tell students what criteria you will use to evaluate their final products. Try to keep it under one page in length.
2. Decide which elements of the assignment are most critical to the learning task and predict which are least likely to be handled successfully by the students. Make a checklist of qualities or elements you will look for in the final product and rank them in the order of their importance. Then rank those same elements again, this time in the order of their difficulty for the students. For example, will the organization of the paper pose serious problems, or is choosing an appropriate topic a bigger challenge?
3. Revise the assignment document to reflect your priorities as expressed in the ranked list mentioned above. Check again to make sure you have left some room within the structure of the assignment for independent and creative responses.
4. Decide on the focus of the prospectus. Keep in mind

both what you consider most important and what you suspect the students will find most difficult or least clear about the assignment. Compose three to seven questions or prompts to elicit information about those central and problematic elements. These are the questions that students should answer for you through the prospectus. Make sure to include a prompt that invites students to indicate their questions and concerns about the assignment. These are the questions that students should ask you through the prospectus.

5. Give students the assignment document first, and then the specific directions for the prospectus. Ask students not to begin substantive work on the assignment until they have received feedback on their prospectuses. Give them a brief but adequate amount of time to complete the prospectus from two day to two weeks, depending on the nature of the assignment.
6. Although the prospectus should not be graded, it is wise to require completion of this technique and to offer students a small amount of credit for a job well done.

**Ideas for using the Technique:**

Skim rapidly through the student responses, or a sample of them, to get an idea of strengths and weaknesses. Note points that catch your attention. In reading the prospectuses a second time, you might try to answer the following questions: Overall, which prompts received the clearest responses? Which the muddiest? What questions or confusions came up repeatedly and therefore should be clarified for the whole class? Which need individual responses? Are there groups of students who are working on similar projects and may therefore benefit from discussing and comparing their plans?

Note the range of topics and approaches that the students propose. Are the students following your instructions? Do you need to rethink your criteria for evaluating, or do you merely need to explain the criteria again more clearly to the students? Also note how, and to what degree, the prospectuses are related to the content and skills on which the course is focused. Make a short summary list of suggestions you can offer to the class as a whole, including sug-

gestions about strengths they can build on and elements that need work.

Limit the amount of information you collect even further. For example, ask only for the title, purpose, and major questions to be answered.

## Assessing Students' Awareness of their Attitudes and Values

### Class Opinion Polls

#### Description:

Opinion Polling is an extension of the classroom practice of asking students to raise their hands to indicate agreement or disagreement with a particular statement.

#### Purpose:

Class Opinion Polling helps instructors discover student opinions about course-related issues. Students often have pre-existing opinions about the material that they will encounter in courses, and those opinions – when they are unsupported by evidence – can distort or block the instructional message. The fact that many opinions are half-formed and unarticulated, and sometimes even unrecognized by the learners holding them, only intensifies their power to interfere with learning. By uncovering student opinions on specific issues, instructors can better gauge where and how to teach about those issues and what the roadblocks are likely to be. In addition, Class Opinion Polling encourages students to discover their own opinions about issues, to compare their opinions with those of their classmates, and to test their opinions against evidence and expert opinion.

#### Suggestions for Use:

Instructors can use Class Opinion Polls to prepare students to discuss a controversial issue or to assess their opinions after they have studied the material. Polling can also be used as a pre- and post-assessment device, to determine whether and how students' opinions have changed in response to class discussions and assignments. Because students are more likely to have opinions on some matters than others, Classroom Opinion Polls are most often used

**Note** In using this technique, remember that student anonymity may be an important factor to maintain and that feedback must be given carefully, to model respect and open-mindedness.

in social sciences, humanities and professional studies courses.

**Step-By-Step Procedure:**

1. Preview the material you plan to include in the course, looking for questions or issues about which students may have opinions that could affect their learning.
2. Choose one or two issues for your Class Opinion Poll and draw up the question or prompt and the response choices. Decide whether the question or prompt requires a binary response choice, such as “yes” or “no”; a scalar response with several choices ranging along a continuum, such as the scale running from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”; or a multiple-choice response.
3. After trying out the question and responses on a colleague and making any necessary revisions, create a polling form.
4. Include directions for the students and tell them how much time you want them to spend completing the assessment technique, such as no more than 5 minutes.

**Ideas for using the Technique:**

To summarize responses to the Class Opinion Poll, students can forward their responses directly to you and you could copy and paste them into a message without their name and e-mail identification information for the discussion list/bulletin board, if you want to preserve the students’ anonymity. After students have had some experience with this technique, they may be willing to post their responses directly to the discussion list/bulletin board.

After students have had some practice with this technique, ask them to explain or justify the opinions they express.

As a follow-up assignment, direct students to respond to an opinion very different from their own. Ask them first to critique the opinion and explain why they disagree; then have them write a rebuttal and justification from the point of view of someone holding the opinion they disagree with.

Polling students on their opinions implies that there will be

## Notes

When instructors learn what students' values are in relation to important ethical questions, they are better able to help students explore and rethink those issues and develop ethical reasoning skills.

Some students resist and resent discussion of ethics and values in a course or they believe that no amount of discussion can change their own or their classmates' minds. For these students this technique may be an intrusion or simply a waste of time.

To assess and respond to students' values and ethical reasoning in a constructive manner, you will need a great deal of patience, skill, and self-knowledge. You may want to begin by using this technique to focus on minor dilemmas and gradually work up to more critical and interesting ones. This procedure will allow you and your students to build trust, confidence, and skill.

discussion of the relevant issues. Be prepared.

## Everyday Ethical Dilemmas

### Description:

In this technique, students are presented with an abbreviated case study that poses an ethical problem related to the discipline or profession they are studying. Students respond briefly to these cases and instructors analyze the responses in order to understand the students' values.

### Purpose:

Everyday Ethical Dilemmas prompt students to identify, clarify, and connect their values by responding to course-related issues and problems that they are likely to encounter. As they respond to this technique, students learn more about their values and their peers values and the ways in which these values affect their everyday decisions. Instructors get honest reactions and information on what students' values are and how they apply them, at least hypothetically, to realistic dilemmas.

### Suggestions for Use:

Although ethical questions can and do arise in every field, ethical dilemmas are most often topics of course discussions in pre-professional and professional education - law, medicine, social work, education, and management.

### Step-By-Step Procedure:

1. Decide on one specific ethical issue or question to focus on.
2. Locate or create a short case that poses the essential dilemma realistically in a few lines.
3. Write two or three questions that require students to take a position on the dilemma and to explain or justify that position.
4. Ask the students to write short, honest, anonymous responses.

### Ideas for using the Technique:

The issue of anonymity is an important one for this assessment technique. You may want to use the survey tool in WebCT which facilitates student anonymity or, students can send their responses to an Instructional Assistant or other colleague who will copy and paste their responses, without identifying information, into a document which is then given to the instructor and can be posted to the discussion list/bulletin board. The instructor can share the most common responses and the various justifications for each position.

This technique can be used as a trigger for further discussion.

## **Focused Autobiographical Sketches**

### **Description:**

In this technique, students are directed to write a one or two-page autobiographical sketch focused on a single successful learning experience in their past – an experience relevant to learning in the particular course in which the assessment technique is used.

### **Purpose:**

The Focused Autobiographical Sketch provides information on the students' self-concept and self-awareness as learners within a specific field. It gives the teacher a composite portrait of the range and diversity of levels of self-awareness and reflectiveness among students in the class. These sketches can provide “starting-line” information against which to assess learning over the course of the semester.

### **Suggestions for Use:**

Focused Autobiographical Sketches should be used only for diagnostic and formative evaluation. This technique is appropriate for any course that aims at helping students develop their self-confidence, self-awareness, and skill at self-assessment. It is particularly useful in introductory courses, especially those that are likely to cause high levels of student anxiety. Under-prepared learners and adult students returning to college seem to find this technique especially helpful. Focused Autobiographical Sketches are most effective at the beginning of courses or units, and should only be used once a term in most cases.

## **Notes**

There are no simple, widely accepted guidelines on how to judge the quality or intensity or value of individual learning experiences; so this technique requires that instructors develop their own.

Many students are relatively proficient at narrating their past experience, but unskilled at critically assessing it. Such students may need instruction and guidance in writing critical, reflective prose, and especially in focusing their writing, before their Autobiographical Sketches will yield much useful information.

**Note** Some students balk at revealing any information about themselves, even when that information is revealed anonymously. Although you will want to explain the purpose of this assessment and to encourage students to take part, do not force anyone to participate.

### **Step-By-Step Procedure:**

1. Determine what element or elements of the students' learning experiences you want to focus the autobiographical sketch on. Clearly limit the focus and make sure it is directly related to the course goals and objectives.
2. Limit the sketch still further by determining what period or periods in the students' lives and what specific areas of their lives – for example, professional, academic, or interpersonal – the sketch should cover.
3. Consider what scale, if any, or criteria you will use to assess the sketches. Then reconsider your focus in the light of your assessment criteria. Does it still make sense? Will you be able to analyze students' responses?
4. If the answer to both of the above questions is “yes,” construct very explicit directions for the students to follow in writing the Focused Autobiographical Sketch. Since these sketches must be short, keep the field of concern as limited as possible.

### **Ideas for using the Technique:**

Since the aim of this technique is to gather well-focused information on certain relevant learning experiences, the analysis of data should be limited to categorizing and counting those experiences in ways that will help you better focus the class. You may simply categorize the types of experiences recounted as relevant or not relevant to the course content. Another approach is to assess the quality or intensity of the experiences recounted. A third option is to assess the level of self-awareness or critical reflection displayed in the sketches.

As a follow-up, ask students to explain the criteria they applied in judging the experiences they chose to write about. For example, ask them to write about how and why they judged the experiences to be successful or meaningful.

# Student Guide

## Student Guide Checklist

Each online course will include information and resources for the students to assist them in completing the course. This information should include:

- ❑ Course overview
- ❑ Required materials
- ❑ Student evaluation system
- ❑ Administrative support
- ❑ Technical support
- ❑ Student Competencies – what makes a student successful online?

## Course Overview

The course overview should address the following questions:

- What is the course about?
- What are the course objectives or outcomes?
- How will the course be taught?
- How is the course organized?
- What are the course requirements?

**Tip** It is a good idea to include a welcome message for students in the course overview and an activity in which students introduce themselves through the course discussion or bulletin board. This kind of introductory activity helps bridge the distance between you and the students and lessens their feelings of isolation. You may want to consider posting your picture in the welcome message or including a link to your personal Web page (if you have one) so students will have a better sense of who you are.

**Tip** List online resources separately and refer to the list throughout the course rather than including them in each module. Online resources need to have their URL updated frequently; listing resources in one place simplifies the updating process. Another option is to e-mail a list of resources to students at the beginning of the course. Encourage students to inform you if they have difficulty accessing the URL; it may have changed since you last visited the Web site.

### **Who helps students with registration and other program questions?**

The Outreach or Instructional Assistants for each program can answer questions about program planning, registration procedures, and other administrative questions.

### **How do students obtain course materials such as text books, course packs, video-tapes, etc?**

Course materials are available through the Grant MacEwan Bookstore. The Bookstore offers a Rapidtext service which allows students to order books using a credit card. Shipping is free of charge. Students can contact the Bookstore by fax at (780) 497-5480, by e-mail at <rapidtext@gmcc.ab.ca>, by phone at (780) 497-5482 – press Menu Option #1 or by mail at RapidText, MacEwan Bookstores, 7319 – 29 Avenue, Edmonton, AB T6K 2P1.

## **Required Materials**

- What resources/textbooks are required?
- What resources are recommended?
- Where can the student obtain or access these resources?

## **Student Evaluation System**

- How will the student be graded?
- How will each assignment/examination be weighted?
- What are the assignments/examination deadlines?
- What is the grading scale?

## **Administrative Support**

How do students get registered into their online course?

- Students follow the same registration procedure for online courses as for on- campus or distance courses, depending on the online course delivery method. Once registration is confirmed, students receive student identification and a password in order to access WebCT ( If WebCT is the course delivery software used in the course). A confirmation list of students registered in the online courses is sent to the instructor.

## Technical Support

Who do students contact if they have difficulties with learning technologies?

- For questions related to content, contact the instructor
- For questions related to difficulties in logging into the course for the first time or if something within the course is not linked correctly (e.g. a link to assignment 1 shows an error message for the student) contact your technical support staff responsible for maintaining your course.
- For questions related to problems using the software within the course, contact the help–desk at <helpdesk@admin.gmcc.ab.ca> or 1–877–497–4267 during business hours. ( Monday-Thursday, 7:00 am-5:00 pm Friday 7:00 am-4:00 pm)

## Expectations for Students

Students who have not participated in online learning before will want to know what is expected of them in this unfamiliar learning format. Students must learn how to learn in an online environment. It is important to clearly communicate your expectations for student participation throughout the course. Students may feel overloaded at the beginning of the course, learning how to use the technologies as well as the course content. You may need to repeat instructions or remind students of your expectations for them.

Some questions to clarify and communicate your expectations for the students include:

- Do I want students to progress through the course at their own pace or do I expect them to complete sections of the course by specific deadlines? For example, will you plan discussions on specific topics that require students to complete sections of the course by certain dates in order to participate knowledgeably in the discussion?
- How often do I expect students to participate in discussions?

**Example** Some examples of help–desk questions are:

- How do I reply to a posting in the discussion area?
- How can I print a page?
- How do I install a plug–in (e.g. shockwave, acrobat reader)?
- I can't get to the log–in screen of TopClass/WebCT.

### **Resource:**

Visit the Online Student Tutorial website for further information about expectations for online students. This website is designed to orient students to an online course environment.  
<http://learn.gmcc.ab.ca/lol/students/tutorial>

**Tip** You may want to ask students what word processing programs they are using so you can set up a way to submit assignments that works for you and the students. There can be difficulties in opening attachments created by different versions of the same program, i.e. a student may not be able to open a returned assignment that is saved as a Wordperfect 8 document if they have an earlier version of Wordperfect. Some students may prefer to fax assignments. Consider offering more than one way to submit assignments.

**Tip** When an individual student asks questions about your expectations for course activities, send your response to the whole class. As in a classroom setting, it is likely other students have similar questions. Explain why you are responding in this way, to benefit all students.

- Will student participation be marked as a way to ensure minimum participation?
- Do I want students to submit written assignments by e-mail?
- What word processing programs do I want used? Can I open Word (5.0, 6.0, 7.0) or Wordperfect (5.0, 5.1, 6.0, etc.) documents?
- Do I expect them to contact me if they have difficulties with content or technical difficulties? Do I want to know they are having problems with the technology even if I need to refer them to technical support staff?
- What procedures or protocols do I want students to follow for discussions, conference, or chats. Discussion and chat protocols are discussed in more detail in the Learning Activities section of the handbook.

## Expectations for the Instructor

Students will also want to know what they can expect from you. Your role during the course will include more facilitation of their learning experience than transmission of information.

Some questions to clarify and communicate your role to students include:

- How quickly can students expect a response to a question sent by e-mail? Many students will likely work on the course during evenings and on weekends. Will you access the course on weekends or Monday mornings?
- How often will you read or participate in class discussions?
- How quickly can students expect a response to assignments and exams? Will you acknowledge receipt of assignments so students will know you've received them? In the recent Learn Online study, students were often uncertain if their instructor had received their assignments. Confirming receipt of assignments reduces confusion and delays when there are technical difficulties in submitting assignments.

## Student Competencies for Successful Online Learning

- Previous computer experience, namely using a word processor, e–mail, Internet browser like Microsoft Internet Explorer or Netscape Navigator, and storing, editing and retrieving files
- Access to a computer, preferably at home or work
- Self–discipline and commitment to the course
- Good written communication skills – clear, concise, to the point
- Regular participation in the course
- Persistence in the face of technical difficulties or delays

Students should also be able to do the following:

- Type/use keyboard and mouse
- Save and find files on the computer
- Copy and paste text (from documents within the same program and across programs)
- Send and receive e–mail attachments
- Use a Web browser
- Print a Web page
- Open and close a new window
- Copy a URL from a site they are at
- Move from TopClass/WebCT to an external Web site and back into the course again
- Know how to bookmark or add a favourite link

### **Resource:**

Visit the Online Student Tutorial website for further information about students expectations of online instructors. This website is designed to orient students to an online course environment. <http://learn.gmcc.ab.ca/lol/students/tutorial>

- Use the features of TopClass/WebCT

## Resources

### Learning Resource Center

The Learning Resource Center (LRC) can help students and instructors find and access resources. The LRC Web site is available at <<http://www.lrc.gmcc.ab.ca>>. In order to access LRC materials and services, students and instructors need a student or staff ID card with a 13 digit bar code number, obtainable through the Circulation Services Desk. This card entitles students and faculty, both on and off campus, to borrow and renew library materials, access databases in which they can find full text journal and newspaper articles, get research and assistance using Ask A Question service, request interlibrary loans and much more.

The Ask A Question service, located on the home page of the LRC Web site, provides answers to research questions online. Minimum browser capability for this service is Netscape 4.0 or Explorer 4.0 and preferences must be set to accept cookies.

The Alberta Library (TAL) card, which entitles valid cardholders of the LRC to borrow books from over 180 libraries in Alberta, is available upon request from the LRC. Students and instructors can call 497-5850 or 1-800-565-4824, or visit the TAL website at <http://www.talonline.ca>, to obtain further information and a list of libraries where The Alberta Library card can be used.

Marlene Baltare, the distance delivery library technician assists in the selection and mailing of appropriate materials, providing extended loan periods and placing collections in regional areas. She can be contacted, toll-free, at 1-800-565-4824, locally at 497-5858 or by e-mail at <[baltarem@yeats.gmcc.ab.ca](mailto:baltarem@yeats.gmcc.ab.ca)>. Distance delivery library staff are normally available from:

Monday–Thursday 8:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.  
Friday 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

This service is provided free of charge. Books are sent with a return prepaid postage label and there is no charge for photocopied materials.

**Note** The Learning Skills Centre assists students to improve their writing skills through planning and revising assignments, learning and test-taking skills including:

- Textbook study strategies
- Time management
- Review strategies
- Vocabulary improvement
- Reading speed and comprehension
- Exam-taking techniques

Some library services are available to MacEwan students enrolled in courses at the following locations:

AVC Grouard Campus	751-3915
AVC Slave Lake Campus	849-8611
Pembina Educational Consortium, Drayton Valley	542-5400
Yellowhead Region Educational Consortium, Hinton	865-7666

Library contact numbers:

- General inquiries, distance delivery service, obtaining library card

(phone) 1-800-565-4824  
(fax) 1-780-497-5895

- Marlene Beltare, distance delivery service

(phone) 1-780-497-5858  
(e-mail) <baltarem@yeats.gmcc.ab.ca>

- Ask a Question e-mail service:  
<virtual@yeats.gmcc.ab.ca>

- Ask a Question Web page:  
<<http://www.lrc.gmcc.ab.ca/research/ask>>

## Notes

The Learning Skills Centre staff provides one-on-one assistance for students on a drop-in basis. Help sessions are typically limited to 15 minutes; appointments are approximately 30 minutes. Distance students, referred to the centre by their instructor, can receive assistance by calling the center with specific writing or study skills questions or may book a telephone appointment for more in-depth assistance. Students should e-mail or fax a rough draft of their papers to the Centre prior to calling for the appointment.

Instructors can arrange a referral for their distance students by calling (780) 497-5876 from 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Monday to Friday. Extended hours (usually 4:00-6:30 p.m.) are available in October and November and again in February and March.

# Support

Here is a list of people, resources and information that can help you develop your online course:

## Copyright

Mark Patten, Bookstore Manager  
497-5481  
<pattenm@admin.gmcc.ab.ca>

Mark can help you with interpreting the Cancopy agreement and how that applies to the resources you want to include in your course.

Visit the LRC copyright page for people to contact regarding the use of special formats and other copyrights issues.  
<<http://www.lrc.gmcc.ab.ca/staff/copyright/contacts/>>

## Curriculum Consultant

Diane Emberg, Curriculum Consultant  
497-5232  
<embergd@admin.gmcc.ab.ca>

Diane can help you with needs assessments and the development of new programs and proposals. She provides support to program leaders and course developers in writing learning outcomes for programs and courses and developing curriculum design. Check out her Web page at  
<<http://www.lrc.gmcc.ab.ca/staff/curriculum/services.html>>.

## Instructional Media and Design

Val Stewart, Educational Technology Facilitation  
497-5606  
<stewartv@admin.gmcc.ab.ca>

Jill Code, Instructional Designer  
497-4554  
<codej@admin.gmcc.ab.ca>

Val Stewart and Jill Code support faculty who are using

WebCT and other course development software. They offer an ongoing series of workshops on various computer applications, which are open to all college staff. Val and Jill offer one-on-one consultations and will design specialized workshops for instructors in particular program areas.

Erwin Veugelers, Computer-Based Instructional Developer  
497-5293  
veugelerse@admin.gmcc.ab.ca

Erwin develops and maintains computer-managed learning (CML) systems and helps faculty incorporate learning and evaluation activities such as The Learning Manager testing service into online courses. He provides support for instructors who are using TopClass course design software. Erwin also coordinates the Computer Technology Partnership Program, which provides one-on-one support for instructors who are using technology in their teaching.

Judith Johnson, Editor  
497-5285  
johnsonj@admin.gmcc.ab.ca

Judith can review and edit your course, including copy editing for elements such as standard punctuation and spelling and substantive editing for elements such as overall consistency, clarity, and organization. She can also help you ensure your course materials are in compliance with copyright legislation.

Kitty Ng, Graphics Technician  
497-5574  
ngk@admin.gmcc.ab.ca

Kitty can create graphics for your course, shoot photographs, and can help you with the design and layout of course materials.

Derick Walsh, Web Media Designer  
497-4613  
walshd@admin.gmcc.ab.ca

Derick creates Web multimedia, including graphics, presentations, animations, video, and audio. He can also provide

assistance in designing Web sites, converting print-based materials to a Web format, and producing CD-ROMs.

Richard Day, Video Producer  
497-5575  
dayr@admin.gmcc.ab.ca

If you wish to include short video clips in your course, Richard can help with the script writing, shoot the footage, edit the material, and compress it for the Internet.

Garry Reddom, Electronics Technician  
497-5573  
reddomg@admin.gmcc.ab.ca

Gary can set up videoconferencing if you want to meet your students from time to time for group interaction, demonstrations, etc.

Clayton Wright, Coordinator  
497-5286  
wrightc@admin.gmcc.ab.ca

If you are thinking about revising existing courses or offering distance education courses, contact Clayton. He can also help you identify sources of funding for course or program development, or assist you in mounting cooperative projects with other institutions in Canada and overseas.

## **Learn Online – Health and Community Studies**

Lynn Feist, Instructional Designer  
497-5407  
<feistl@admin.gmcc.ab.ca>

Lynn assists Health and Community Studies faculty in planning and developing online courses or course elements. She coordinates course development work within the Learn

**Tip** Students can e-mail a reference question to the Ask a Question service and receive timely assistance for their research and resource needs.

**Note** In order to access library collections and distance delivery services from the College, you will require an LRC card. To request a card, contact the LRC's Distance Delivery Service through the toll-free number or forward your request through your Program Coordinator or Outreach Assistant. The card will be valid as long as you are employed by the College.

Online development team and provides assistance to faculty teaching online.

Gord Lacey, Web Developer  
497-5289  
<laceyg@admin.gmcc.ab.ca>

Gord provides support for Health and Community Studies program and conference web sites. He also develops selected multimedia elements for online courses using Quicktime VR to create pictures, and movies.

Cheryl White, Research Coordinator  
497-4688  
<whitec@admin.gmcc.ab.ca>

Cheryl provides research and evaluation support for Health and Community Studies programs. She can assist HCS faculty in identifying funding sources and preparing proposals for course development projects, developing online evaluation tools and research activities.

## Learning Resources Centre (LRC)

Library contact numbers:

General inquiries, distance delivery service, obtaining a library card:

(local phone)	497-5850
(long distance)	1-800-565-4824
(fax)	1-7800497-5895
website	< <a href="http://www.lrc.gmcc.ab.ca/">http://www.lrc.gmcc.ab.ca/</a> >

Ask a Question service  
<<http://www.lrc.gmcc.ab.ca/research/ask/>>

Equipment bookings	497-5869 (Barb Gibeau) gibeauB@yeats.gmcc.ab.ca
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Yvonne Rezek, Web Services Librarian  
497-5885  
<rezeky@yeats.gmcc.ab.ca>

Yvonne provides support to faculty by providing customized education and training in the use of Web-based electronic resources. One-on-one consultations in instructors' offices

or group faculty training in the LRC computer lab are available upon request. Focus of instruction is in the use of academic or scholarly Web-based electronic resources including full text databases, electronic journals, the library catalogues and the World Wide Web. She also provides analysis of course content with respect to available library services as well as help in locating related online course material, evaluation of Web resources, and online library services for on and off campus students.

## **Library services available to instructors**

Library staff will:

- Prepare selective bibliographies
- Verify the availability of materials for assignments
- Assist with collection development
- Answer reference and research questions
- Provide guidance on electronic databases
- Provide interlibrary loans from local, provincial, national, or international libraries
- Assemble available materials from the collection to be sent out to your site
- Provide library instruction workshops for your students upon request
- Provide the Alberta Library card to MacEwan staff which will allow limited borrowing privileges from participating libraries throughout the province.
- Provide learning skills materials and workshops to enhance student academic success

## **Professional Development**

For more information about Instructional Skills Workshops, New Faculty Orientation, or other faculty professional development activities, visit the Faculty Development website at <http://www.facultydevelopment.gmcc.ab.ca/>

## Online Resources

- CanCopy Agreement for Grant MacEwan College  
This site provides a checklist for instructors who want to include copyright protected resources in their course.  
<http://www.lrc.gmcc.ab.ca/staff/cancopy/>
- WebCT web site - this includes several articles on use and implementation of WebCT in online and classroom courses.  
<http://www.webct.com/library/>
- WebCT support page  
<http://www.webct.com/get/>
- Strengths and Weaknesses of Online Education  
This site offers a brief look at the strengths and weaknesses of online education.  
<http://illinois.online.uillinois.edu/model/proandcon.htm>
- Summary of Best Practices in College Teaching by Tom Drummond, North Seattle Community College  
This site is a good listing of teaching and learning practices centered on classroom based teaching but applicable to other delivery formats.  
<http://nscx.sccd.ctc.edu/~ecep/bsprac.html>
- Center for Critical Thinking, Sonoma State University  
The Center for Critical Thinking has created a wealth of information including instructional guides and lesson plans to help educators implement Critical Thinking in every aspect of their teaching.  
<http://www.sonoma.edu/cthink/K12/k12class/trc.ncl>
- University of Tennessee Teaching Resource Center  
This site includes a discussion of why and how to use case studies.  
<http://ntlf.com/html/lib/faq/cs-utenn.htm>
- Ted Panitz's Cooperative Learning page  
Ted is a Professor of Math in an eastern American college and has put together a variety of resources focusing on cooperative learning. This site includes a cooperative learning e-book and a WAC e-book containing a variety of writing assignments. His writing assignments are targeted

at in-class teaching contexts but can be adapted to an online environment.

<http://www.capecod.net/~tpanitz/tedspage/>

- Virtual Resource Site for Teaching with Technology  
This site compiles examples how programs or instructors are teaching with technology. You can search by teaching strategy or by technology.  
<http://www.umuc.edu/virtualteaching/module1/strategies.html>
- Enriching Discussions with Technology  
This site compiles practical advice from online teachers on how to use technology for online and in-class discussions.  
<http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~tep/technology/techdisc.html#facetoface>
- Replacements for the Red Pen  
This site provides some advice on how to use Microsoft Word to mark assignments online.  
<http://as1.ipfw.edu/99tohe/presentations/nourse.htm>
- How Interactive is your Distance Course?  
This site provides a rubric to assess the interactivity of your distance course.  
<http://www.westga.edu/~distance/roblyer32.html>
- The Internet Detective  
This site contains a 2 hour tutorial to help students and instructors learn how to evaluate the quality of the information they encounter on the Internet. The site is free and requires users to register before beginning the tutorial.  
<http://www.desire.org/detective/>

## Printed Resources

- Educational Technology Professional Development modules  
These modules are available through your program chair or from Instructional Media and Design. Some of the titles in this series include:  
Computer Assisted Instruction  
Design and Layout  
Electronic Search Techniques  
Independent Study and Distance Education  
Instructional Design  
Internet: An Introduction  
Internet: Using TopClass  
Managing Student Data  
Writing a Print-based Module  
To order these modules, contact Kitty Ng at 497-5574 or order online at <http://www.gmcc.ab.ca/nw/imd/etpdp/> Check with your program chair as several programs may already have copies of these modules.
- Wright, C. (1987) *Course Developer's Manual*. Grant MacEwan Community College. (City Centre, Jasper Place and Millwoods LRC call number LB 2361.W75). This manual is a thorough, practical guide written for MacEwan instructors who are developing a course. The manual is intended for instructors who are writing a print, module-based distance course, however, it is a good guide on how to structure and organize a course regardless of course format.
- Angelo, T. A. & Cross, K. P. (1993) *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers*. 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. (LRC City Center call number LB 2822.75.A54 1993)  
This book provides a large number of assessment techniques and includes a teaching goals inventory exercise that allows you to summarize your teaching goals and to relate your assessment activities in your course to those goals. It is practically written and includes many examples.

# Competencies

The following are a list of basic skills you will need to teach online. You will find that the more skills you have, the more comfortable you will be teaching online, and the better instructor you can be for your students.

- Saving and finding files on your computer
- Copy and paste text (from documents within the same program and across programs)
- Send and receive e-mail attachments
- Use a Web browser
- Print a Web page
- Open and close a new window
- Copy a URL from a site you are at
- Move from TopClass/WebCT to an external Web site and back into the course again
- Know how to bookmark or add a favourite link
- Use the features of TopClass/WebCT

## Online Teaching and Course Development Skills

- Ability and willingness to learn new technology  
You do not need to be a technology expert but you do need a basic understanding of how to manage information and communication online.
- Ability to project your own personality, sense of humor and interest in your students  
You must interact with students who may never see you; creating a sense of community among students in the

**Note** Val Stewart can assist you in developing these basic skills. Contact Val at 497-5606 or <stewartv@admin.gmcc.ab.ca>

**Resource** Characteristics of Successful DL Educators <<http://www.rit.edu/~609www/ch/faculty/effective2.htm>> A listing of characteristics for successful and “star status” distance learning teachers.

Six Ways to Discourage Learning

<http://www.aas.org/%7Eeducation/sixways.html>

A good summary of common things teachers do that do not help the learning process.

class will increase student motivation and participation.

- Willingness to use teaching techniques that may differ from those you already use. Online teaching requires a shift to a more learner-centered approach and requires that you explore beyond lecture-style teaching strategies.
- Willingness to adapt course design  
Online course development is a team process. Your course development plan may require some changes to incorporate format or navigation conventions or to make effective use of communication or multimedia technologies.
- Interested in and responsive to student queries and feedback. Timely responses to student questions and concerns are very important. Encourage discussion contributions and negatively reinforce silence by prompting students who are not participating. Student opinions regarding course content, relevancy, pace, delivery problems, and instructional concerns are needed for responsible course modifications.

## Resources

- CNS Help desk at 497-HELP or <[helpdesk@admin.gmcc.ab.ca](mailto:helpdesk@admin.gmcc.ab.ca)> for general computer questions (hours 7:30-4:30 Monday – Friday)
- Yvonne Rezek at 497-5885 or <[rezeky@yeats.gmcc.ab.ca](mailto:rezeky@yeats.gmcc.ab.ca)> for questions on using the Internet, evaluating Web sites and using search engines
- Educational Technology Professional Development Program modules – available at <<http://etpd.gmcc.ab.ca>>.
- Val Stewart at 497-5606 or <[stewartv@admin.gmcc.ab.ca](mailto:stewartv@admin.gmcc.ab.ca)> for questions on using software such as word processors, browsers and communication programs.

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