UWGONLINE

March 2012

• **UWG** ONLINE thinking outside the box •

Associate Dean's Corner
with Dr. Jason Huett

*G*reetings colleagues and welcome to the March edition of our newsletter!

Welcome back. I hope everyone had a wonderful spring break. You may have noticed that right before our spring break, President Sethna sent out a message to all faculty and staff recognizing online learning as a vital component of our plans for the future and our *Destination University Vision*. I thank him for his support and leadership. We are all working together to secure the future of this great institution for generations to come!

Most of you know that we are getting ready to transition Learning Management Systems (LMS) from CourseDen to Desire2Learn (D2L). This is a bit of a quantum shift for many of you and your students. So, I would like to use the remainder of this month's column to detail what we currently know about the coming transition.

Starting January 2013, all current CourseDen classes will be delivered using Desire2Learn (D2L) and CourseDen will no longer be available for course delivery after this date.

We realize this is a major new adoption and will require a significant time commitment on the part of many of our faculty. The good news is that we will be here to help at every step of the transition, and, furthermore, D2L is an excellent product with many new useful features that should allow for increased functionality and a higher-quality, more interactive, and more engaging online learning experience for you and your students.

Right now, information is coming in daily, but, in an effort to keep you as informed as possible, here is what we currently feel confident sharing:

Associate Dean's Corner
Continued

- Starting January 2013, we will no longer be using what we now know as CourseDen (aka WebCT, Blackboard, Vista). Right now, we *believe* you will still have access to CourseDen to review your past courses for a limited time after this date, but this is not a guarantee at this point. However, *no instruction* will be delivered in CourseDen starting January, 2013. This is not a negotiable item. In other words, you need to have your class built in D2L and ready to teach before the spring 2013 semester begins.
- You will be fully supported throughout this migration. We are developing self-paced online trainings, face-to-face group trainings, other customized trainings, etc., and we will have one-to-one help available. Keep a watch out for future training announcements.
- Your current online course can be exported from CourseDen to D2L. However, if you have been through a transition before, you know that "exported" *does not mean* "ready to teach."

  While we feel confident saying that much of your content can be exported from your CourseDen section to your new D2L section, this does not mean that the content will be organized logically or that all links will work, etc. We suspect that a significant time investment will still be required to "clean up" the class even after the export. The take away: do not wait until the last minute to export your course in fall 2012 and expect the class to be ready to go for spring 2013.

  The safer approach is to assume that the class will require an entire rebuild and budget your time accordingly. In fact, in many cases, we recommend rebuilding from scratch rather than exporting for two main reasons: 1. Rebuilding the class in its entirety will go a long way toward familiarizing you with D2L, and this will help with your teaching. 2. This transition presents a great opportunity to revisit your course and make any necessary updates/changes/additions etc. that may be overdue. Remember, we are here to help you rebuild, but you need to be aware of the time you will have to commit to making your course transitions a success, too.

  Below is our currently projected timeline. There are several steps to this transition. The D2L adoption is being rolled out state-wide, so there are many factors that are *out of our control*. However, we will be as transparent and proactive as possible during the coming months to keep you informed and to facilitate as smooth a transition as possible. However, please understand that this timeline is subject to change and only represents our best understanding to date.

May, 2012
- D2L overview and Q&A sessions for the Colleges. We will be conducting these as "town hall style" sessions so watch for announcements.
- Online self-paced trainings. We anticipate having several online self-paced preview trainings available for interested faculty.

Associate Dean's Corner
Continued

June
- Faculty gain access to the D2L environment. You should have "sandbox" courses to play with at this point.
- Online self-paced trainings continue.
- D2L face-to-face cohort trainings begin. Watch for announcements.
- D2L face-to-face workshops begin. Watch for announcements.
- Automatic course rollover (CourseDen-to-D2L) begins. We are unsure, at this time, how courses will be prioritized for rollover.

July – December
- Online self-paced trainings continue.
- D2L face-to-face cohort trainings continue. Watch for announcements.
- D2L face-to-face workshops continue. Watch for announcements.
- Automatic course rollover (CourseDen-to-D2L) continues.

January, 2013
> D2L goes live for all classes.
> Workshops and trainings continue.

Well there you have it! This is what we know so far. We appreciate your understanding, patience, and dedication as we move forward.

On to the newsletter!

In this newsletter, we meet Richard White—a busy teacher and family man earning his *second* online degree within the University System of Georgia. Our worldly and well-rounded graduate assistant, Julie Matsunaga, is profiled in our "Meet the Staff" section, and we hear from Todd Matthews, assistant professor and interim chair of the highly-innovative Sociology Department in our "Online Faculty Spotlight."

As usual, enjoy the rest of the newsletter and, if you have any feedback or ideas for inclusion, please send them our way.

Cheers,
Jason

I Am West Georgia

Featuring Richard White

I grew up in Franklin, Georgia, Heard County, one of the poorest counties in the state. I graduated from high school in 1988, and in the Fall of that year jumped right into school at West Georgia College. I am forever a Brave and in 1992, graduated with my first undergraduate degree, a B.A. in History with a minor in Psychology.

At the time, online learning was unheard of and computers were essentially used for word processing. I returned to school in 1997 with the intentions of raising my GPA high enough to get into education, but instead graduated in 2000 with a B.S. in Sociology (Criminology) and a B.A. in Psychology. By this time computers were an integral part of learning and research, but online learning was still a fairly new concept.

In 2007, after the birth of my daughter, I quit my job in law enforcement to go into the field of education and fulfill what I believe to be my true calling. It was at this point in my educational journey that I became immersed in online learning and found out just how well it worked for me. I believe that UWG Online has helped to make me successful both as a student and as an educator.

Distance education works for me because it is flexible and allows me to work from home instead of coming to campus almost daily. This means that I can work fulltime, spend time with my family, and still get a quality education. Many of the classes that I have taken for my initial teacher certification have been either completely online or partially online. I attended the University of Georgia and earned an M.Ed. completely online in Educational Psychology, and am within two semesters of earning my Ed.S. completely online at UWG.

All of this work in total, helps me as a teacher, as well as helps me demonstrate to my students that we are never too old to learn, or to love, learning. Using the distance education platform, I can even share my work with them. It also bears mentioning that I can work almost anywhere that I have a Wi-Fi signal or can get online, and this lets me work at my pace and keep up with deadlines.

I Am West Georgia
Featuring Richard White

The faculty involved in most of the online courses I have taken have been excellent. Dr. Jason Huett, Dr. Leslie Moller, Dr. Marty Bray, Dr. Kathy Vanderbilt, and many others, have served as mentors and inspirations both as advisors and as teachers in my classes. It is very rare that a professor will engage students in discussions away from the course, but in almost all of my classes professors have encouraged my attitude and ideas, and made me feel more like a peer than a student. There is no way to express the value of this as I continue my educational journey; it helps me to see that my thoughts and ideas have a great value to society as a whole. I have learned so much and have so much more to learn about instructional technology and online learning that I can hardly wait to see what is next. I am happy to say that the projects that I have worked on in my classes have translated to my professional world as well. Two examples would be a lesson plan for stop motion videos and a promotional video. My students have been taught how to use cameras and have completed stop motion videos on cell division; the promotional video that I put together in class on Cobb County's new attendance policy was shared within our school cluster and linked on our school's website. That is the ultimate recognition for hard work, at least in my eyes.

I have entered a job market that is ultra-competitive and the demand for highly qualified and skilled teachers has never been higher. My education and training at UWG has provided me with the knowledge and skills to compete in this market. Interactions with my classmates and professors help to drive me to be the best student and teacher that I can be, and have helped inspire me to be a creative and thought-provoking educator myself. I will use these tools to inspire my students and myself to continue to learn, and to reach goals that are not easily attained.

I am a Wolf, I am West Georgia, and I am an online student.

Meet the Staff

Julie Matsunaga
Graduate Assistant

I am a graduate student in the Psychology department pursuing the licensure track. I hope to graduate this summer. My personal, professional orientation leans towards Developmental Psychology; I am especially interested in adolescence.

I have a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, with a minor in German from Berry College in Rome, Georgia. Upon graduating from college, I worked briefly for the Office of Personnel Management with the United States government. I lasted three weeks before the mediocrity bored me silly. I left and went to work for Delta Air Lines. I worked initially as a reservations sales and vacation planning agent. Later, I moved to in-flight service where I served as a flight attendant in the days when there was actually service. I loved my job and had many years of great times with Delta. I traveled the world via the friendly skies. I had many exciting experiences, saw many different places, and met lovely people everywhere.

Currently, I am working as a graduate assistant for UWG Online. As far as technology and online education goes, I could not live without Google and Schmoop. CourseDen is what the department primarily supports and I find it useful. I believe, following current changes in education, more advanced learning management platforms will become available in time, and offer a more user friendly and developed array of services.

With school, work, and family, I haven't much time to pursue other interests. I try to squeeze in aerobic workouts and weight training as well. When I have time, I do like to cook, trying recipes I haven't made before. I love spending time with my little nieces who are 4 and 2 years old.

Online Across Campus

Department of Music

The Department of Music will provide and deliver a 100% fully online Master of Music, in Music Education. The goal of the program is to take the existing program available through the Department of Music, and replicate it in a 100% online, student-led, mainly asynchronous environment. Dr. McCord reports that, through the department's extensive research in gearing up for this transition, many currently available, similar programs, include some element of an on-campus, face-to-face requirement. This new program at UWG will be devoid of this. Currently, many Music professors instruct within a blended mode, utilizing the CourseDen Learning Management System; no officially partial or total distance online courses are offered to students. In consistency with the replication of the quality and integrity of the current face-to-face Master of Music, in Music Education, this online degree will be NASM (National Association of Schools of Music) and NCATE (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education) accredited. The attention to creating a mainly asynchronous mode of instruction is needed in order to facilitate the needs of a very special population of professionals, including UWG Music alumni, who are so often unable to attend any class sessions, including synchronous online sessions. While the new program will parallel existing collaborative and participative aspects of the current Master of Music, in Music Education, this will be at the student's discretion per assignments and experiences required per course, by the instructor. The program will run in a cohort-based fashion, within a mainly instructional asynchronous environment, fueled by technology that supports sound sources, including video.

The fully online Master of Music, in Music Education will be the first of its kind in the state of Georgia and will welcome both residents and non-residents, in the hopes to reach a unique population of professionals with the desire to extend their knowledge, both professionally and educationally, while maintaining personal investments.

-Dr. Dawn McCord,
Associate Professor of Music Education & Organ

Department Website

Online Teaching Tools

Wunderkit **(Ready, Set, Organize!)**
This tool is all about getting your ideas down and sharing them with whomever you like. Your profile and subsequent notes or *workspaces* are always reachable remotely, including via your mobile device; no longer will you be required to hunt down that paper list that houses all of your most precious insights and to-dos. Wunderkit allows you to work with others: set up a project task-list, track team progress, or brainstorm with notes; this free tool allows groups to access and organize workflow easily and efficiently.

Poll Everywhere **(Your Vote Counts!)**
Use Poll Everywhere to obtain real-time feedback via individuals' mobile devices. Schedule a meeting with colleagues, reach student consensus, or gain insight into your audience's opinion via text message. Watch this demo video to learn more.

SnackTools **(Media Made Easy!)**
This suite of web applications allows you to simply create and publish various forms of rich and accessible media; add pizzazz to your course and share with your students! Use Quizsnack to create online surveys and quizzes, Flipsnack to create stylish online flip books, Slidesnack to share your presentations, Sharesnack to publish stories, and much more...

Media Plugs of the Month
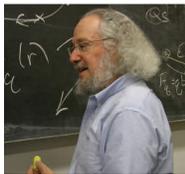
Rethinking the Way College Students Are Taught

With technological advancements comes the need to rethink instructional methodologies and effectiveness. This article, from the American Radio Works series *Don't Lecture Me,* looks at differentiated pedagogy and the power of peer-instruction. From Questions to Concepts: Interactive Teaching in Physics exhibits and discusses emerging concepts in detail.

A Vision of Students Today

This short video summarizes some of the most important characteristics of students today - how they learn, what they need to learn, their goals, hopes, dreams, what their lives will be like, and what kinds of changes they will experience in their lifetime.

Building Rapport with Students by Sharing a Piece of Yourself

Learn the effects of building rapport through self-disclosure. Faculty nationwide share ways in which they incorporate personality into their courses; don't miss the comments at the end of the article.

Online News & Notes

***Online Learning Factoid* of the Month:**
Senate Bill 289 sponsored by state Sen. Chip Rogers, R-Woodstock, would mandate that all Georgia high school students complete at least one online course starting in 2014. However, the House voted to remove the mandate this week and stating instead that online classes should be "encouraged."

If you only *Try One Thing* this month, try this:
LiveBinders—Collect, create and share virtual 'binders' of instructional resources and information. LiveBinders allows for quick updating of information without having to resend links or passing out paper copies. Check out the Top 10 rated LiveBinders and video tutorials in order to get an idea of what works and is effective in comprehensive digital information storage and presentation. Check out this public LiveBinder by UWG Online: Technology Integration & Resources; see *508 & Universal Design* for important information regarding accessibility & culture.

If you are *Adventurous* check out:
Tildee—This free tool allows you to create and share tutorials instantly! You may incorporate maps, videos, and images to any segment of your tutorial and begin sharing via a unique URL that refers to each tutorial created. Begin creating media-driven instructions and incorporating the information into

Professional Development

Teaching Well Online (T.W.O):
Faculty Development Conforming to National & State Standards & Models
Thursday, March 28, 2:00-3:00 p.m.
Follow the course development and design processes developed through the award winning State University of New York Learning Network, including instructional design strategies from Quality Matters, and design research using the Community of Interest (COI) collaboration model. Register.

Leverage the Web for Common Core
Thursday, March 28, 7:30 p.m.
Learn how web tools can help students become content curators and collectors of information with purpose and discernment, and how these lead to supporting the Common Core. This webinar will look at web tools, including LiveBinders, and some examples that exemplify what content curation looks like, so that your students can begin to think in new ways and extend their learning to college and career readiness! Register.

Simulations Made Easy with Adobe Captivate 5.5: Basics & Best Practices
Thursday, March 29, 11:00-12:00 p.m.
Learn the basics of screen-capturing with Adobe Captivate in this webinar; creation and modification best practices via simulations will be included. Using Captivate, you may capture information and processes completed via your own computer and manipulate these recordings to deliver to students and colleagues in a number of modes in order to support online learning. Register.

UWG ONLINE: Happenings, etc.

Training & Workshops: UWG Online Spring 2012: Getting Started & FDC Open House

The following events are scheduled **drop-in sessions** to be held at the Faculty Development Center:

Directions to FDC

For more information contact Debra Robinson @ debrar@westga.edu
or Matias Marabotto @ mmarabot@westga.edu

"508 and You: What you need to know for Compliance"
March 20, 2-3pm & March 22 9-10am

Upcoming:

****Summer Cohort Trainings begin June 11*

****Training & Orientation to Desire2Learn begins late May*
Desire2Learn is UWG Online's new and improved Learning Management System!

For an extensive day-to-day account of upcoming available **Training Sessions & Workshops** offered by UWG ONLINE click here and select **UWG ONLINE** from the category list.

Online Faculty Kudos

We would like to commend the following faculty on their efforts and achievements!

Kim Holder: *Instructor, Economics*
Professor Holder incorporates an exceptionally creative assignment, dubbed *Rock-o-nomix*, to both Macro- and Microeconomics courses, pushing students to both conceptualize and apply what they are taught, in formats that are relevant to contemporary college students; retention of concepts taught is high. Provided with minimal instruction and humor-filled guidelines, students, in groups, are required to create and upload a video to YouTube that is essentially a cover-song that presents concepts and terms related to economics. The assignment has been observed as supporting and stimulating students who are seen as at-risk, having low academic motivation or simply learn best in non-traditional modalities. See the 2011 Finalists here; be forewarned, you may end up spending quite some time enthralled with these videos: they are excellent!

Kim Huett: *Instructor, Educational Innovation*
As project manager of the "Henry County Project," school library media and/or instructional technology graduate students serve as course reviewers of fully online or blended learning courses being offered in several schools in Henry County. Kim designs and maintains the wiki through which teams of reviewers conduct their reviews through a three-phased project. The wiki serves as an effective bridge between the course reviewers and the "clients," who are practicing teachers in Henry County Schools. When asked why she does this, Kim explains "... it keeps me in touch with what some pioneering K-12 teachers and administrators are doing in local schools. The project keeps evolving as we discover ways to improve it, and that keeps it exciting, too."

Online Faculty Spotlight

Todd Matthews
Assistant Professor of Sociology; Interim Chair

I have been an Assistant Professor of Sociology at UWG since 2008, and I have been Interim Chair of the Department of Sociology since January. I was previously Interim Assistant Dean in the College of Social Sciences. I am married with two cats, and I like to read and spend time outdoors whenever possible.

For the past two years, I have taught undergraduate Research Methodology online, and I will teach it online again in Summer and Fall 2012. This course serves both the Sociology and Criminology programs. I have also taught Introduction to Sociology online as part of the eCore program. I am not involved in any further projects at this point, but I am considering the possibility of putting other courses up online, as student demand and programmatic inertia both dictate.

Within my online instructional methodology I utilize CourseDen (of course), Blackboard IM for chatting with students, Snagit to capture images, YouTube and other sources of videos. I am still fairly low impact in my course, but I am continuing to experiment and am quite open to emerging technologies. Even though I don't use it much, I really like Camtasia because it can allow us to bring a key element of face-to-face instruction (lectures) that are much closer to replication in the "virtual environment".

I have told my colleagues that I genuinely believe teaching online has helped my pedagogy in all settings, because it has forced me to be very deliberate and thoughtful about course design and instruction in ways that I did not necessarily have to think about in the face-to-face setting. This is particularly true because Research Methodology is NOT an easy course for students in any setting, so I have really been forced to be quite innovative and experimental in what I do in that course. Also, I have started to integrate in my face-to-face classes some of the multiple modes of reaching out to students necessary in an online environment, which I believe has strengthened my teaching in that setting.

I believe online instruction adds a valuable dimension to what we do well already here at UWG: *provide a high quality education for the next generation of leaders and citizens in a personal environment*. Some may argue that virtual instruction cannot be "personal" because it lacks the intimacy and immediacy of "live" interaction, but I disagree and would point to the multiplicity of ways students can interact with professors, either one-on-one or in groups, that simply do not exist in the face-to-face classroom. Now I do not think it will or should "replace" face-to-face instruction, but I believe online classes and programs allow us to better serve different constituencies who to date have had their opportunities to acquire higher education limited by the realities of an exclusively on-campus educational approach. As a sociologist, this greatly excites me as many of these groups are currently marginalized or limited in their options, including those who live in more remote/rural areas, individuals with significant family responsibilities such as single parents, older individuals who may be intimidated or uncomfortable in a room mostly full of 18-22 year olds, etc.

Questions & Submissions

For questions, suggestions, or items to include in the next newsletter such as:

***Upcoming Events, Workshops, & Trainings
*Publications & Other Achievements
*Online Teaching/Learning News & Insights**

Please contact Rhea Wojcik:

rheaw@westga.edu

*We look forward to learning about and sharing your experiences and achievements.
Thank you for your contributions!*

Check it out: UWG Online Newsletter Archives

UWG ONLINE CHALLENGE

The first person to email the correct answers to the following questions will win something cool!

1. **How does Mr. Smallwood's coursework translate into his profession as a teacher?**

2. **What does Professor Holder entitle the creative & media-driven assignment students complete in her courses?**

3. **What mode of online instruction will be primarily utilized within the new fully online Master of Music, in Music Education program?**

Please email rheaw@westga.edu: list your full name, contact information and your department. All questions must be answered correctly and previous winners are ineligible (we are trying to spread the love around.) Items awarded are for faculty use and will be transferred to department inventory.
Thank you !

UWGONLINE
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