



October  
2012

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UWG ONLINE

Thinking Outside the Box



## Associate Dean's Corner

with Dr. Jason Huett

Welcome to the October edition of the UWG Online Newsletter. I was recently asked to be a guest blogger for *Georgia Public Broadcasting* and the *Southern Education Desk*. I am blogging about educational reform and the future of education. For this month's column, I thought I would include a copy of my first blog. It is titled "Charting a Realistic Course for Educational Reform." If you are interested, give it a read and let me know what you think:

I cannot count the number of times friends or colleagues have sent me a link to Dr. Mark Edmundson's *NY Times* OP-ED piece "[The Trouble With Online Education](#)" and asked some version of "Well, what do you think of this?" While I find *much* more to disagree with in Dr. Edmundson's opinion than to agree with, I won't take the time to dissect it point by point. That has already been done in numerous places including this [open letter](#) from *Inside Higher Ed* by Dr. Joshua Kim.

The problem with opinions like Dr. Edmundson's —and I would add opinions on the opposite end of the spectrum that endorse online learning as the "savior" of education as well — is that they almost always stem from drawing some sort of false comparison e.g., there is amazing face-to-face (F2F) learning, so online learning is inherently inferior. Or, on the opposite end, that online learning allows for such unmatched access, efficiency, and opportunity that F2F instruction is an obsolete delivery medium.

The jury is not out on the efficacy and importance of either medium to the future of educational reform: both can be equally effective; both can be equally dreadful; both will become a part of almost every educational institution's identity. There is no one ideal way to teach or to learn. There are preferred ways in given situations and with certain subjects catered to particular audiences, but, by and large, no one delivery platform can lay claim to the superior approach. The sooner we come to terms with this idea, the quicker we can get on with charting a path to real, sensible, productive reform.

There are a few things I believe I can say with confidence about the future direction of education. Education will be more technology-enhanced, accessible, flexible, and social and education *will have to be* more affordable. We cannot address these changes by re-treating into polarized camps in the online vs. F2F debate. Extreme positions invite

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resistance. Resistance leads to gridlock (US Congress, anyone?). Gridlock is not an option if we are to reform our educational system.

Under the new federally mandated formula for calculating graduation rates, [Georgia's rate](#) was reset to 67.4%. That equates to roughly one third of all Georgia students failing to complete high school within the traditional four-year timespan. Combine this with research showing that approximately 58% of all jobs in Georgia [will require postsecondary education](#) by 2018, and one begins to see the severity of the problem. Addressing this problem requires divergent thinking. Simply continuing with the way we have always done things, because, well, it is the way we have always done things, is not an acceptable approach.

Recently, Governor Nathan Deal –along with all the presidents of the University System of Georgia and the presidents of the Technical College System of Georgia– launched [Complete College Georgia](#) (CCG), a part of the larger *Complete College America Alliance* to address the above issues along with several others. The immediate, and I would argue positive, impact of CCG was to force institutions to face the identity crisis that has been bubbling under the surface of each institution for years. Technological advancements, a changing student demographic, decreased funding, increased competition, new student expectations about teaching and learning, a rapidly evolving work place, and other factors are coming together and forcing institutions to ask themselves some very tough questions about who they are, and, ultimately, who they want to be.

It is this identity crisis that is at the heart of Dr. Edmundson's criticisms of online learning. It is not really about the efficacy of the online medium; rather, it is about a future direction for education that he cannot relate to or support.

Do we cling to the ways of the past that we hold sacrosanct, or do we strategically move forward into the world of technology-enhanced education? The answer is, and has to be, both. We can chart a sensible, realistic, middle ground for educational reform, devoid of the hype from either side, where F2F teaching and learning exists in a symbiotic relationship with online teaching and learning. It is time to ditch the partisan rhetoric and get on with reinventing our approach to educating *everyone* including those who can come to campus, and those who, for whatever reason, cannot.

There is lots of useful D2L information in this month's newsletter, and thank yous go out to Dr. Madhavi Sethna and Ron Hopkins for our "Online Faculty Spotlight" and "Meet the Staff" submissions respectively.

I hope you enjoy the newsletter,

Jason Huett

*Associate Dean of Online Development and USG eCore*



## *Meet the Staff*



**Ron Hopkins**

*Graduate Assistant*

In 2008, I enrolled at the University of West Georgia seeking to finish my bachelor's degree in English Literature. However, while taking an introductory course in psychology, I immediately became enthralled with the material and very quickly changed my major. While I had originally intended to only get my bachelor's degree, with each new class and each new theory, I became certain I was going to pursue this much further than my original intention.

My interests are primarily in the cognitive sciences, which is a blanket term for several different disciplines which focus upon matters of the mind. Reasoning, problem solving, and decision making are my main interests for a great deal of fascinating work goes on within each of those areas. At the moment, my own research and work is focused upon the effects of emotion upon cognition as well as studying how reasoning is influenced by both biases and heuristics. Ultimately, I would like to teach psychology at the university level while studying how motivation can facilitate the teaching and use of critical thinking skills.

As for my life outside of school, I am an avid reader of philosophy and enjoy recreational training in boxing and muay thai. Between my work in Distance Learning and my work for classes, my free time is often quite limited so I try to get as much out of it as possible!

Working in Distance Learning provides a great deal of opportunities to learn about pedagogy as well as cultural shifts in education. For example, I have recently been assisting Dr. Madhavi Sethna with creating videos which will be used in her classes. These videos focus upon metaphors for teaching and instruction which we have put to film to demonstrate many important aspects of education. Out of this experience, I have gained a great deal of insight into both methods of instruction as well as considerations for the many ways in which students assimilate and use information.

It is experiences such as these that make my work at Distance Learning very rewarding for both myself as well as the faculty our department supports.



### *Online Around Campus*

#### **E-Core**

eCore, the University System of Georgia's electronic core curriculum, offers students the opportunity to complete undergraduate and general educational requirements online at eight accredited colleges and universities, including the University of West Georgia.

eCore is designed to expand a student's educational experiences independent of time, location and physical boundaries. Students with special needs or disabilities will find a welcoming, accessible environment in eCore.

With eCore, getting started with an online degree is simple. The University of West Georgia and the University System of Georgia offer online programs that are particularly suited for busy or working students who want a degree from a respected institution. General education core courses are available online now through eCore at UWG.

For more information visit: [ecore.westga.edu](http://ecore.westga.edu).

### *Online Teaching Tools*

#### **Beginner Tech**

**TechSmith Camtasia:** A great beginners video editing software program, Camtasia combines simple screen recorder software and basic video editing functionality to give you the tools you need to customize and edit your own videos. You can record on-screen activity, add imported media, and then share your videos in HD with your students. They can then watch these videos anytime, on nearly any device. Camtasia is a great option for the novice video editor to incorporate short 10-15 minute videos into your CourseDen courses. The Faculty Development Center has several laptops and flip cameras available for check out so you can try out this great piece of software, and a very knowledgeable staff to help you get started with your video project.

#### **Advanced Tech**

**Adobe Premier CS 6:** This advanced video editing software has tremendous capabilities and features that can turn any video project into a big-screen worthy production, yet it is a fairly easy to learn piece of software. If you have used Camtasia before and said to yourself "This is ok, but I really wish it could do this..." then Adobe Premier is your answer. Better still is the fact that you get Adobe Premier CS 6 as part of the Adobe CS6 Master Suite 6 available from ITS by contacting the helpdesk at 678-839-6587 or e-mail [servicedesk@westga.edu](mailto:servicedesk@westga.edu). We also have computers available for checkout with this software at the FDC as well.

#### **Free Software Training**

Try out Atomic Learning. They have software training tutorials for hundreds of pieces of software, including Camtasia and Premiere. Give them a try at [www.atomiclearning.com/highed/](http://www.atomiclearning.com/highed/) username is *UWG*, and the password is *college*.



### *Online News & Notes*

**Gates Foundation Offers Grants for MOOC's in Introductory Classes:** The Gates Foundation is circulating to colleges and universities a request for proposals for MOOC's that focus on the gateway courses that often trip up low-income and underprepared students. The foundation will award as many as 10 grants of up to \$50,000 each for MOOC's in "high-enrollment, low-success introductory-level courses. The foundation wants to know, for instance, which students benefit most from MOOC's and which kinds of courses translate best to that format. It is also hoping to learn how educators can support students who are enrolled in online courses but who aren't naturally self-directed learners.

*[The Chronicle of Higher Education, Wired Campus](#)*

### *Professional Development*

#### **Join us in the Clubhouse**

Beginning in October, join us every Thursday from 12 to 1 at your desk for D2L Clubhouse. Via Blackboard Collaborate, we will be convening to discuss the latest tips, tricks, and tools; answer questions; and discuss best practices in designing courses in Desire 2 Learn.

Use the following link and join us beginning Thursday, October 4th at noon!

10/18/2012 Time: 12:00-1:00 p.m.

10/25/2012 Time: 12:00-1:00 p.m.

11/01/2012 Time: 12:00-1:00 p.m.

11/08/2012 Time: 12:00-1:00 p.m.

11/15/2012 Time: 12:00-1:00 p.m.

<https://sas.illuminate.com/m.jnlp?sid=2012076&password=M.E9C9107420C99671ED6C267801CEFC>

#### **D2L Lunch and Learn Series Sponsored by USG**

The "Teaching with D2L" series of lunch-and-learn sessions presented by Ginger Durham will offer an overview of many of the exciting new possibilities when using instructor tools in Desire2Learn. Demonstrations and handouts will focus on pedagogical best practices using specific tools available in the USG's new learning management system.

Dates/Topics:

October 23 - Noon - Grades

October 30 - Noon - Quizzes

The sessions will be held online in the DI Group's Collaborate Professional Development Center.

To join go to <http://digroup.gcsu.edu/collaborate> and choose the link to Rooms.

You will also find links to a "Getting Ready" page and the Collaborate Support Portal.

Register for these sessions at:

<http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/WEB22GQZSQB6AV>



*UWG ONLINE: Happenings, etc.*

**October Training, Workshops, & Events**

**Introduction to D2L**

10/22/2012: Time: 1:00 - 2:30 p.m. Location: FDC

<http://events.westga.edu/EventRegistration.aspx?Rid=1361&lid=16979&Frm=O>

10/24/2012: Time: 9:00 - 10:30 p.m. Location: TLC 1106

<http://events.westga.edu/EventRegistration.aspx?Rid=1363&lid=16981&Frm=O>

10/29/2012: Time: 1:00 - 2:30 p.m. Location: FDC

<http://events.westga.edu/EventRegistration.aspx?Rid=1371&lid=16991&Frm=O>

11/05/2012: Time: 1:00-2:30 p.m. Location: FDC

<http://events.westga.edu/EventRegistration.aspx?Rid=1381&lid=17005&Frm=O>

**Working with Migrated Courses in D2L**

10/24/2012 Time: 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. Location: TLC 1106

<http://events.westga.edu/EventRegistration.aspx?Rid=1365&lid=16983&Frm=O>

10/31/2012 Time: 8:30 - 10:30 a.m. Location: TLC 1106

<http://events.westga.edu/EventRegistration.aspx?Rid=1375&lid=16995&Frm=O>

11/02/2012 Time: 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. Location: TLC 1116

<http://events.westga.edu/EventRegistration.aspx?Rid=1377&lid=17001&Frm=O>

11/07/2012 Time: 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. Location: TLC 1106

<http://events.westga.edu/EventRegistration.aspx?Rid=1387&lid=17011&Frm=O>

11/09/2012 Time: 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. Location: TLC 1116

<http://events.westga.edu/EventRegistration.aspx?Rid=1393&lid=17019&Frm=O>

**D2L: Homepage, Profiles, Widgets, Announcements, and the Navbar**

10/30/2012 Time: 9:00 - 10:30 a.m. Location: TLC 1106

<http://events.westga.edu/EventRegistration.aspx?Rid=1373&lid=16993&Frm=O>

11/6/2012 Time: 9:00 - 10:30 a.m. Location: TLC 1106

<http://events.westga.edu/EventRegistration.aspx?Rid=1383&lid=17007&Frm=O>

**D2L: Email, Calendar, and Intelligent Agents**

11/07/2012 Time: 9:00 - 10:30 a.m. Location:

<http://events.westga.edu/EventRegistration.aspx?Rid=1385&lid=17009&Frm=O>

**D2L: Respondus & D2L Quiz Tool**

10/18/2012 Time: 9:00 - 10:30 a.m. Location: TLC 1106

<http://events.westga.edu/EventRegistration.aspx?Rid=1359&lid=16975&Frm=O>



*UWG ONLINE: Happenings, etc.*

**D2L: Content with the Course Builder Tool**

10/10/2012 Time: 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. Location: TLC 1106

<http://events.westga.edu/EventRegistration.aspx?Rid=1349&lid=16961&Frm=O>

10/26/2012 Time: 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. Location: TLC 1116

<http://events.westga.edu/EventRegistration.aspx?Rid=1283&lid=16826&Frm=O>

11/08/2012 Time: 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. Location: TLC 1106

<http://events.westga.edu/EventRegistration.aspx?Rid=1389&lid=17013&Frm=O>

11/14/2012 Time: 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. Location: TLC 1106

<http://events.westga.edu/EventRegistration.aspx?Rid=1399&lid=17025&Frm=O>

**D2L: Gradebook**

10/25/2012 Time: 9:00 - 10:00 a.m. Location: TLC 1106

<http://events.westga.edu/EventRegistration.aspx?Rid=1367&lid=16985&Frm=O>

10/25/2012 Time: 4:00 - 5:00 p.m. Location: TLC 1106

<http://events.westga.edu/EventRegistration.aspx?Rid=1369&lid=16989&Frm=O>

11/13/2012 Time: 9:00 - 10:00 a.m. Location: TLC 1106

<http://events.westga.edu/EventRegistration.aspx?Rid=1395&lid=17021&Frm=O>

11/13/2012 Time: 12:30 - 1:30 p.m. Location: TLC 1109

<http://events.westga.edu/EventRegistration.aspx?Rid=1397&lid=17023&Frm=O>

Be sure to check out the UWG|Online Desire2Learn page for the latest information on D2L with step-by-step tutorials, information on how to get one-on-one assistance, and an up to the minute training calendar! [Click Here](#)

*Online Faculty Kudos*

**We would like to commend the following faculty for completing the Summer 2012 Cohort successfully!**

*Cheryl Brown*

*Mary Beth Slone*

*Dian Wise*

*David Jenks*

*Megumi Fujita*

*Hannes Gerhardt*

*Dawn McCord*

*Patricia Riley*

*Jesus Salvador Peralta*

*Elizabeth Kramer*

*Pauline Gagnon*

*Karen Rollins*

*Francis Stonier*

*Sheikh Tijan Drammeh*

*Laurie Ware*

*Jill Drake*

*Susan Hall*

*Melissa Cavallin Johnson*

*Judy Butler*

*Angela Insenga*

*Miriam Nauenburg*

*Lara Willox*

*Carol Wilson*

*Susan Welch*

*Li Cao*

*Daniel Bakos*



*Online Faculty Spotlight*



**Madhavi Sethna, Ed.D.**

*Lecturer*

*Educational Technology and Foundations*

When Dr. Deb Jenkins (EDUC Coordinator) suggested that I consider teaching one of the EDUC classes as an 100% Online or a Hybrid (more than 50% online) section, I hesitated a little. I hesitated not because I did not want to use technology to teach but I could not envision, could not “see” how I would convert some of the lessons I teach in my Face to Face classes and present them in the “virtual” environment. I simply enjoy meeting students, coming to know them, listening to their narrative in a classroom; I was not prepared to give up that pleasure and energizing experience. However, I took on the challenge by agreeing to do the Hybrid section for EDUC 2130 which explores Teaching & Learning. With help from Dr. Jenkins and the energy and support from the colleagues at the FDC, I am having an exciting time! I am glad that I took on that challenge.

The lessons I am converting to online delivery are lessons that I have presented in my Face to face classes where I encourage students to look at a demonstration of what may seem like a task unrelated to education, and reflect on metaphorical links to understand their future as educators. In this process I find myself feeling “liberated” and it has been an exhilarating experience. I am able to “free” myself from the confines of my class room to demonstrate the task and actually succeed in including others in their own native environments to drive home the point of my lesson.

Let me share a specific example. In the past, Mr. James Hembree, Director of Landscaping at UWG, used to provide me with flats of annuals, planters, potting soil, sand etc. for me to do some of my demonstrations. In these lessons (a series of demonstrations), I bring in flats and plants into my class.

In one lesson, a student volunteer is asked to transplant one seedling to a planter filled with enriched potting soil while another student transplants multiple seedlings in another identical planter and yet another student transplants one seedling to a planter filled with sand.

Given that I was “free”, Ron Hopkins and I went to UWG Greenhouse where Mr. James Hembree allowed me to demonstrate the lesson in the native environment itself.

In addition, Mr. Hembree himself was able to share his passion for plants of all shapes and sizes and explain how he viewed his responsibilities of nurturing plants, monitor them, prepare them, keep them healthy before they are transplanted around campus in a planned and organized



manner. It was a wonderful feeling to be able to provide an experience to my students in the natural native environment.

According to my students who have done the reflective assignments related to the series of such video demonstrations, the videos allowed them to view these short clips multiple times as they tried to link the textbook theory and concepts to what they saw. Had the same demonstrations been just done in “real time” they felt that had they not taken detailed notes and had they not done the assignment right away, memory loss would have caused them to not be able to approach the task as an iterative and additive task. That was an advantage that I had not considered till my students mentioned it. And as an educator, the fact that the lesson delivery made possible by technology added value for my students left me with a positive feeling.

So far, most of the technical work has been done exceptionally well by FDC however I have recently been given access to the Server and Camtasia Software and so I gradually look forward to acquiring technical skills to be able to do editing, mixing, converting by myself. I am at an exciting place and look forward to updating my technical skills. At this point in time, my entry into the Hybrid Courses has been a great experience for me and my students. Thank you.

Madhavi Sethna, Ed.D.

*Educational Technology and Foundations*



*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 Charles Akin:

[cakin@westga.edu](mailto:cakin@westga.edu)

*We look forward to learning about and sharing your experiences and achievements.*

*Thank you for your contributions!*

**UWG ONLINE CHALLENGE**

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

- 1.** According to the new federally mandated formula for calculating graduation rates, Georgia's rate was reset to \_\_\_%.
- 2.** What organization offers grants of up to \$50,000 each for MOOC's in "high-enrollment, low-success introductory-level courses?"
- 3.** Where can you go online for free software training and tutorials?
- 4.** Where can you go every Thursday from 12pm-1pm to get the latest information on Desire2Learn?

*Please email [cakin@westga.edu](mailto:cakin@westga.edu), list your full name, contact information and your department. All questions must be answered correctly. Items awarded are for faculty use and will be transferred to department inventory. Thank you!*

