Distance Education Update

As the fall semester closes in upon us, we wanted to touch base with you on a couple of matters related to course development for online learning. First of all, Mike Johnson, the College’s Instructional Designer and Webmaster, has relocated to Alabama due a medical emergency that a family member is experiencing. However, he will continue to serve in this capacity, and his ability to assist you with any instructional design needs you may have should not be compromised. He pretty much does everything via e-mail and over the Web anyway, so it is unlikely you will even know he is gone. We will be adding another Instructional Designer who will be available to work with you on campus in supporting your course design.

Second, we have started an article of the month news item that will appear on the College’s Office of Distance Education and Multimedia Services (ODEMS) Web page. Links to articles of interest will be placed there for your review. The articles will focus on issues related to online learning including best practices for assisting instructors in preparing quality online instruction; marketing distance education programs; and enhancing learning outcomes for online students.

Third, we will begin disseminating periodic BlackBoard tips for those of you who are designing courses in Blackboard. Mike will be developing these tips based on his experience in working with several of you during course development activities. The first tip is actually a checklist of items for you to consider when developing your online course. It may give you some ideas for things to incorporate in your courses.

Finally, if you plan to teach an online course in the Spring ’06 semester and would like to work with Mike to help you design your course, you should let us know no later than September 30 so we can get you included in our schedule. As you know, well-designed courses take time to develop. Mike can dramatically enhance your course, but he needs to schedule time to hear about your ideas and to be able to work closely with you in developing the course. Though he is currently working on the design for three new courses, he is more than willing to field your questions and provide assistance to your ongoing course development. Simply e-mail him at Mike.Johnson@eku.edu.

Please let us know if you have any questions about our ongoing or future activities.

Online Course Development Checklist

Included with this newsletter is a checklist for developing or enhancing your online course. The check list gives you a quick listing of some the tools available for you in Blackboard and then provides a list of ideas that you need to consider when developing your course. Our office is here to assist you in any way possible. We can develop the course for you using your knowledge and content or we can serve in an advisory role and provide help as you need it while you develop the course and throughout the semester.
Using Email with Online Courses

Keeping up with email from students in your online course can be time consuming and overwhelming. Follow the tips below to stay organized and reduce the amount of time you spend on email.

Establish Course Correspondence Policies

1. Any e-mail correspondence regarding the course must include the specific course ID as the first letters of the subject line (for example, CRJ 890).
2. The course ID should be followed by a space and a distinctive subject (e.g., CRJ 890 question on discussion board #3)
3. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that the email address they have listed in BlackBoard is correct and that they are able to receive email at that address.
4. General questions that might be helpful to other students should be posted in the Virtual Office discussion board so everyone can see the answer.

Create rules to sort email from students

If you require students to put the course title in the subject line, you can easily sort all mail about a particular course into a specific folder. Create a folder in your Inbox for each course you are teaching. Then require students to use the course number in the subject line of emails. The Outlook rule will move anything with that course title into the proper folder.

Benefits:
- All emails about a course are in one place
- The emails are not cluttering up your Inbox so you can get to them when it’s convenient for you
- When the course is over you can archive the whole folder of messages to have a complete record

Course Assignments

Keep all course assignments within BlackBoard. Do not accept assignments as email attachments. When an assignment is set up in BlackBoard, it is automatically entered in the grade book. Students can access the assignment and submit it to you through Bb.

- You don’t get 30 files with the exact same name
- It doesn’t fill up your Inbox
- You don’t have to reenter the assignment information in the grade book
- Students can see when the assignment has been graded
- You can download all student work at one time

Schedule Time for Responding to Course Emails

Let students know your schedule for responding to emails. You don’t have to respond to every email as it comes in. Sort course emails into a folder and schedule times each week to respond to them.

If several students contact you with the same problems, don’t respond to them individually. Post a response as an announcement or in the Virtual Office in the BlackBoard course so everyone can see it. Then remember to clarify the issue in the course documents or assignment instructions so it doesn’t come up again next semester.

How to Create an Email Rule in Outlook 2003

1. Select Rules and Alerts from the Tools menu.
2. Click the New Rule button.
3. Select “Move messages with specific words in the subject to a folder.”
4. In the bottom of the window, click on the “specific words” link.
5. Enter the words you want to use on for the filter, such as the course name (COR 100) and click add. Then click the OK button.
6. Click the “specified” link.
7. Select the folder you want the messaged moved to or click the New button to create a new folder to move the messages to.
8. Click OK
9. Click the Finish button.
10. Your new rule should now be listed. Click OK to close the Rules window.
Using Discussion Boards

Discussion boards allow students to interact with both you and with their classmates. The discussion boards can take the place of verbal discussions you may have used in your traditional courses. The information below provides some tips for getting the most out of BlackBoard discussion boards.

- Make participation mandatory.
- Give specific instructions, e.g. "post a 2 or 3 paragraph response about the Week 2 readings by Tuesday, and respond to at least one classmate's post by Thursday."
- Use the Virtual Office for students to post general questions about assignments. When you respond to them in the discussion, everyone can see it and you won’t get individual emails from them.
- Use the Class Lounge to give students an informal place to discuss what’s going on outside of the course. If a regular course discussion begins to get off topic you can suggest that students discuss it in the Class Lounge.
- Encourage students to respond to their classmates’ posts. If no one is responding, you can simply post a response that says, “Do you agree with this post?”
- Model the type of discussion contributions that you hope to see from your students. Make sure that you are “visible” in the discussion on a regular basis, but resist the urge to lecture. How often you contribute to the discussion, and the tone of your posts, will influence students’ degree and type of participation. Praise students who have contributed in an exemplary manner.
- Use the discussion board at the very beginning of the class to create a "team spirit." Ask students to introduce themselves, or to share their thoughts on a simple topic, during the first week of class.
- Send private e-mail to encourage quiet or shy students who have not been participating in the discussion. If some students are dominating the discussion, contact them privately by e-mail with some suggested guidelines for their participation. Try not to deflate their enthusiasm, but do try to help them communicate in a more effective manner.
- Although you are the expert in the classroom, resist the urge to tell students the "right" answer during a discussion. Guide them to discover the answer through discussion with one another. This will result in a better grasp and retention of the course materials, as well as a more active learning experience for the students.
- Actively wrap up a discussion when you want the class to move on to new material. Post a new thread titled "Wrapping up this discussion" that offers a brief summary of what has been discussed. You can then "Lock" the discussion, preventing further replies while still allowing everyone to review the discussion’s content.

Justice & Safety Website

Have you seen the new Justice & Safety website?

The College website is constantly being updated and improved to help us reach prospective students and provide resources to faculty and existing students.

Improvements:
- Consistent look and feel
- Clean design
- Updated news listings
- Calendar of events
- Updated departmental pages
- Video interviews with professors and alumni
- Easy requests for more information
- Automated photo gallery for each department

www.justice.eku.edu

Faculty & Staff Only

The Faculty & Staff section of the website provides you with access to a variety of tools. Once you log in to the site with your email address and password, you can:

- Update your contact information
- Submit information about news and events to be published on the home page and on your department page
- Submit websites to be added to your department’s list of online resources for students

If you need help accessing this part of the website, contact our office.
Using BlackBoard with a Traditional Course

BlackBoard courses are automatically created for all EKU courses. They can be used with traditional, face-to-face courses to help students and make your job easier.

1. **Post your syllabus.**
   Is your syllabus pushing 20 pages? Time to think about making it available on-line. Only the students enrolled in your class can see and print it.

2. **Post documents, graphics or URLs for access during class.**
   Use Blackboard as your “overhead projector.” Post items you want to display in class. When in class, access Blackboard. All your items are in one place and available for students after class as well. Less need for copying handouts.

3. **Distribute a reading list that is linked to sources.**
   If you have a list of journal articles that you want students to read, post the list in Blackboard and create links directly to the articles. Gives access to the material 24-7. Send us the list and I’ll create the links (mike.johnson@eku.edu) or do it yourself.

4. **Host an online expert.**
   Ask an expert in your field to answer questions generated on the Discussion board by your students. Expert opinion that is easy on the expert.

5. **Email your whole class with one click.**
   Use the email function in Blackboard to send a message to the whole class at one time.

6. **Give collaborative tools to groups to work on a project outside class.**
   Each group can have its own Discussion board, chat, group email and virtual classroom where geographically separated people can view and edit the same document.

7. **Use Safe Assignment**
   Collect assignments in digital form. All files are collected in one place and each is time stamped. Safe Assignment checks student work for plagiarism.

8. **Create a study quiz.**
   Post a quiz that gets at the main points in a reading. If you supply corrective feedback for wrong answers a quiz can be a valuable learning tool.

9. **Use the Discussion Forum**
   For students to post their work and get other student’s feedback on it.

10. **Give students instant grading or ongoing feedback on their progress.**
    Tests in Blackboard are graded instantly. If part of your mid-term or final is multiple choice, matching or fill in the blank, put just that part in Blackboard. Consider posting grades for class work and assignments in Blackboard. That way students will know exactly where they stand.

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**BLACK BOARD UPDATE**

Several new tools are now available for use in your online courses through BlackBoard.

Visit the ODEMS website for more information: www.justice.eku.edu/odems

Using BlackBoard with your traditional, face-to-face courses can help you make the transition to online teaching.

**Assistance with Your Course**

In order to get help with your BlackBoard course Mike Johnson, our Instructional Designer, needs to have access to it. As the instructor, you can add Mike to your course as a Course Builder.

To add him, first use the control panel to add Mike to your course as a student. His Bb username is johnsonmi. Then use List/Modify Users in the Control Panel to change his status from student to Course Builder.

If you need help with this, contact our office.