
DISTANCE LEARNING E-NEWS

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The Things I Did Badly: Looking Back on My First Five Years of Teaching

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Like Birthdays, anniversaries are occasions for reflection, and as I approach the fifth anniversary of my teaching career, I find that my thoughts are drawn to the things that I did badly. Here's a list of five teaching mistakes I have made. I share them in the hope that they will cause others to reflect, and perhaps help new professors to avoid making these mistakes.



Professor Graham Broad, University of Western Ontario, Canada

Not taking advantage of research on pedagogy

It's curious: as a graduate student in history, I was trained to maintain the highest evidentiary standards in my scholarship, to situate my research in a body of existing literature, and to scrutinize every claim I made for any possible error. And yet, when it came to teaching, I went entirely on instinct, teaching the way I was taught, assuming that was good enough. It wasn't. Nearly a year passed before it occurred to me that

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CNM Joins the Ning Social Network

Ning competes with MySpace and Facebook in the social networks arena

By Michelle Renteria, CNM DL Achievement Coach and
Miranda Evjen, Marketing Coordinator, MCO

Ning (www.ning.com) is a customizable social networking platform allowing users to create their space around a common interest. Ning was launched in 2005 to appeal to people who want to create their own social networks around specific interests with their own visual design, choice of features and member data. The word "Ning" is Chinese for "peace." It is also a surname in Chinese.

The advantage of Ning over other social networks (My Space, Facebook) is that it is slightly more attractive in look and feel. You start by choosing a combination of features (videos, blogs, photos, forums, etc.) from an ever-growing list of options. Then customize how it looks, decide if it's public or private, and add your brand logo if you have one. People who join your network will automatically have a customizable profile page and

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there might be scholars in the field of pedagogy, too, and that maybe they'd written useful material about how to teach! Was I in for a surprise. Keeping up with that field is a major scholarly undertaking. So I limit myself to two journals specific to teaching in my field, and over the years, I've attended workshops and compiled a modest collection of books on teaching. I'm glad to say that my instincts weren't entirely off, but I also know that I'm a much better professor now for having learned from the pedagogical literature.

Chastising the whole class

We all get exasperated at times, and the temptation to let a whole class have it is sometimes hard to resist. In my third year as a professor, though, I had a "eureka" moment in the midst of bawling out a class for its poor attendance. It suddenly occurred to me, "I'm talking to the people who *are* here." I was making them resentful—and doing nothing to reach the people who were the source of the problem. Ever since then, I've dealt with the problems on a one-on-one basis, except in cases where nearly everyone is doing something wrong.

Being defensive about student complaints

Yes, there is something presumptuous about undergraduates, who often are teenagers, griping about their professors. Have they taught? Studied pedagogy? Don't they realize how good they have it? More and more, however, I remind myself that, since I'm training them to critically assess every reading and, indeed, every truth claim placed before them, I can hardly object when students turn those very faculties of critical inquiry on me. Instead, I've moved toward greater transparency in my teaching methods. I also took the advice in Gerald Graff's book *Clueless in Academe* and made my own pedagogy part of the discussion.

Answering student e-mail at all hours

I'm considered a student-friendly professor, one who is always willing to lend a hand. Last year, however, I inserted a passage in my course outlines stating that I would answer student e-mail during regular business hours only: Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. I think one of the damaging ideas conveyed by various inspirational books and movies about teachers who make a difference is that teachers are not entitled to private lives, that they must be on call for their students at all times. If the purpose of education is, as the ancients believed, to help us lead "the good life," what kind of example am I setting if I live entirely to serve my students? A corollary: I no

longer answer e-mails that ask me questions that students can answer for themselves using the course outline and other resources (e.g., "What is the final exam worth?"). Some students complain that I'm slow to respond to e-mail, but I remind them in a good-natured way that students somehow muddled by for thousands of years without e-mail at all.

Egotism

As some point in the past year, I decided that my initial beliefs that I could reach *all* students and that *all* teaching problems could be resolved through correct pedagogy weren't optimism, but rather egotism. Some students, I have come to understand, aren't that into me. I give all students the same benefit of my time and experience, and I tell those who are slipping that they *can* stand upright. But I realize that some of them choose not to, so I have decided to respect that choice, even if I believe that it's the wrong one.

Final Thoughts

Above all, I have come to realize that the division between teacher and scholar is an artificial one. Over the past five years, my teaching has improved by leaps and bounds whenever I have applied the same standards of critical scrutiny to my pedagogy that I have always applied to my research. I can only assume that, in another five years, I'll be shaking my head at some of the methods I'm employing now.

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David Burns, Publisher. ❖*

SUMMER 2009 TERM INSTRUCTIONS



Rafael Martinez – DL Specialist & Editor

By the time you read this note, I will be out of state on Family Medical Leave. During my absence, Brian Ditmer will be performing the Blackboard Administration duties. Keep in mind that we are a small department with responsibilities that have a direct impact on close to 20% of the student population. Therefore, your cooperation in the next few weeks is very much appreciated. Here is how you can help:

- 1) If you are currently teaching the same class you will be teaching this summer, be aware your class will be loaded (recycled) immediately after spring finals are over.
- 2) Use the course request form located at: http://forms.cnm.edu/dl/request_teach.htm to communicate your course requirements. This includes Faculty who use Blackboard to enhance their face to face classes (Web Enhanced).
- 3) Make sure you use the notes section of the course request form to communicate special requirements (i.e. load my shell from last year, load shell from course development, etc.)
- 4) Email Brian at bditmer@cnm.edu if you need to ask him questions.

We will once again have four course categories in the View Course List section: summer 2009 Online, Blended, Hybrid & Late Starting Courses. Web Enhanced courses can be found in the Online Courses category.

Hopefully, this is the last term you need to open your class for self-registration. The courses need to be open early on the 1st day of class, May 18, 2009 (or the night before). Late starting courses may remain close until their start date.



will be able to message and friend each other.

CNM has set up its own Ning network to give the CNM community a place to discuss what's important, blog, upload pictures and connect with each other in new ways. The CNM Ning site can be found at:

<http://yourfutureatcnm.ning.com>

Logging in is not required to look around, but after joining, users can login and can create and customize their own profiles (much like those of Facebook or MySpace), contribute to discussions and blogs, post events and interact with others in the network. Groups can also be created within the network to help users share information about specific interests. The CNM Distance Learning Department now has its own Group within the CNM Ning Network.

If you would like to see an example of a popular Ning network, visit www.dukecityfix.com

The CNM Ning network is just beginning, we encourage you to join, explore and contribute. Should you have any questions, please contact Miranda Evjen in the Marketing and Communications Office (MCO) at 505 224-3682. ❖



SUPPORTED BLACKBOARD BROWSERS

Listed below are the supported operating systems and browsers for use with the Blackboard Academic Suite. The Academic Suite is a Web-based application and other browsers and operating system may work well, however, the listed configurations are the only configurations that are tested and supported by Blackboard Inc.

[Supported Browsers – Click For Complete List](#)

Please note from the chart definitions that “Certified” is the fully tested and supported browser, therefore this is the ideal configuration. Compatible means that key Blackboard application areas have been tested but it is possible that some areas will not work (i.e. html editor).

From the list we can see that the ideal configuration would be a PC running Windows Vista and IE 7 or Firefox 2 or 3.

For MacIntosh users the ideal configuration is Mac OS 10.5 with Safari 3 or 3.1 and also Firefox 2 with OS 10.5. ❖

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: In the Q&A section of the March 2009 newsletter you were asked about downloading student’s papers for a particular assignment all at once. You indicated this was not possible. Could you clarify this? I believe this is doable.

A: We have to admit we were in error on our previous response. To download exams (which are submitted via the assignments tool) in one process, go into the Assignment, check the title box which selects all submissions for that assignment. You then click

Create Printable View (at the bottom of the page). This gives you the option to Save to a File, which you do. The file is then in your content manager. Then go into my content manager, click on the drop down menu next to the file & choose download to save the folder to my computer. When you do that, it gives you the option to “open” that folder, with all your student files (plus some other files, submission html files, which you will probably don’t need).

We would like to thanks BIT Instructor Dawn Addington for the clarification.

Q: I have been receiving some strange errors in Blackboard. In

Mediasite Support Site Now Available!

CNM IMR – Media Production Services creates Mediasite support webpage

Mediasite is a leading web communications and content management system for lecture capture, event webcasting and online presentations. You can display your recording online for people to watch at their convenience. Your audience watches through the Mediasite Player, making it easy to navigate and play from any point in your presentation.

[CNM - IMR - Mediasite Support](#)

Distance Learning instructors are currently using Mediasite for Biology, English, and Math courses. Some instructors have used Mediasite to record their course greeting.

The newly create CNM IMR Mediasite support page contains basic information on system requirements for viewing Mediasite presentations, technical support contact information, and a tutorial on the operation of the Mediasite Viewer.

The tutorial comes in two flavours: one with video and audio and the other with video, audio, and captions. The tutorial will provide your students with a good overview of the viewer functions and tips on how to get the most out of a Mediasite presentation. ❖

the Discussion Group, when I try to open it, it says “the release status of this item has changed since you logged in, it is not currently available.” Any ideas how to fix this?

A: We have received a few Oracle database errors during the middle of March that were referred immediately to Blackboard Inc. and Oracle Corp. They came back with some suggestions (database batch size adjustment) that were implemented right away. We are keeping a close look but so far we have not seen the error recurring.

CNM DL Department website gets a new look

Please take a couple of minutes to check out our new streamlined look at: <http://www.cnm.edu/depst/dl>

The screenshot displays the CNM Distance Learning Department website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the CNM logo and the text "Find your course." Below this is a yellow navigation menu with links for HOME, ABOUT CNM, BUSINESS & COMMUNITY, AREAS OF STUDY, CURRENT STUDENTS, and FUTURE STUDENTS. A search bar is located in the top right corner.

The main content area is titled "Distance Learning Department at CNM" and includes a section for "EN ESPAÑOL" with a "DISTANCE LEARNING" banner. Below the banner, there are two boxes: one for "Attention Summer 2009 Distance Learning Students" with a "Click Here" button, and another for "Summer 2009 Distance Learning Schedule".

A central section titled "Summer 2009 Distance Learning Course Instructions" instructs users to "Click on the delivery method below to access course information;". This section lists three types of courses: Online Courses (delivered completely online), Blended Online Courses (majority of content delivered via Internet, some required on campus), and Hybrid Courses (combines face-to-face instruction and online learning). It also mentions Video Courses (delivered via DVD or videotape).

Below the course information, there are several service tiles: "Log in to Blackboard", "EMBANET - 24 HR Help Desk" (with phone number 1(888) 560-4927), "Blackboard Tutorials", "Course Definitions FAQ'S", "Testing Center Information (Main Campus)", "Online Tutoring Information" (with "Find your Smarthinking Account" link), "Distance Learning Newsletter", and "Course Definitions".

On the left side of the page, there is a sidebar with "About Distance Learning" links (Blackboard Log In, Distance Learning Faculty, Distance Learning Students, Contact Us, DL Home), a "my CNM" logo, a list of links (Staff / Faculty Directory, Campuses, Faculty & Staff Resources, CNM Foundation, Jobs at CNM, Distance Learning, Libraries, CNM Computer Service Desk, Site Map), and "QUICK LINKS" (Cost & Financial Aid, Course Catalog/Addendum, Dates and Deadlines, Registration, Schedule of Classes, Short Term Schedule).