Teaching Learning Center

A GLIMPSE INTO VANGUARD²

The first offering of Vanguard² was a complete success. Graduation was May 1 and the participants were eager to show off everything they learned during the four week course. The first two weeks of Vanguard² consisted of classes where participants came to the TLC and took part in discussions concerning a variety of subjects relating to online teaching. The goal was to give all participants the tools to update their eCampus site to be much more appealing and effective for students. The second half of the course gave participants time to implement what they had learned in the first two weeks. Here is a brief synopsis of what took place the first two weeks.

Day One: Tim Xeriland introduced the basics of how to design an online course. Fundamental questions were posed from *What the Best College Teachers Do* including:

◈ What should my students be able to do intellectually, physically, or emotionally as a result of their learning?

◈ How can I best help and encourage them to develop these abilities and to use them?

◈ How can my students and I best understand the nature, quality, and progress of their learning?

◈ How can I evaluate my efforts?

Day Two: Tim discussed website design. He gave several tips to make eCampus cleaner, easier to navigate, and more efficient. Here are a few of the tips he gave to the class:

◈ Navigation – Make sure there are no empty, missing, or unnecessary buttons. Streamline down to as few as possible. Rename the buttons if necessary for clarification

◈ Clicks – Three clicks should allow you to arrive at the material desired.

◈ Attachments – Use simple files like .rtf, it's helpful to have options for Mac users.

◈ Location – Keep dates in a central location and be redundant with important information.

◈ Accessibility – Use Alt tags when images are used and include descriptive titles, not just "click here." Be sure links work and if there is audio, be sure there is a transcript.

◈ Simplicity – Less is more! Remove gratuitous material.

Day Three: Tim Covered the online syllabus and suggested to use bullet points whenever possible to condense lengthy ideas and to avoid big blocks of text.

QUICK TIPS FOR IMPROVING YOUR ECAMPUS SITE:

◈ Add a banner to personalize your site.

◈ Include a tutorial for problems students encounter frequently.

◈ Make sure all links work properly.

◈ Add a bulleted list whenever possible to avoid large areas of text.

◈ Is there a trail of breadcrumbs? Can students navigate the site easily?

◈ Keep it simple! Remember that less is more.

◈ Dividing the class into groups on the DB can make students less overwhelmed with the amount of content and more likely to post or respond.

Day Four: Ginnette Serrano presented ideas of how to incorporate group work into your online course. Here are some great types of group assignments:

- ◈ Discussion Groups
- ◈ Role Playing
- ◈ Students as Teachers
- ◈ Formal Debate
- ◈ Writing Groups
- ◈ Group Projects
- ◈ Base Groups

Day Five: Christa Crawford covered the basics of using graphics on eCampus. She showed the group how to create banners and how to use graphics effectively.

Day Six: Ginnette and Christa shared their knowledge and ideas regarding Chats, Blogs, Wikis, Twitter, and Social Networking.

Day Seven: Ginnette and Christa showed the participants how to use Articulate and Captivate for their lectures and tutorials.

Day Eight: Tim covered video and avatars. The group was able to see Second Life in action and the benefit of students being able to "see" one another and chat in real time.

"What should my students be able to do intellectually, physically, or emotionally as a result of their learning?"

-What the Best College Teachers Do

CEDAR VALLEY COLLEGE

Room A206A
3030 North Dallas Avenue
Lancaster, Texas 75134

Phone: 972-860-8239
Tim Xeriland: TLC Director
txeriland@dcccd.edu

Instructional
Assistant: Christa Crawford

Faculty Advisor: Ginnette Serrano

END OF THE SEMESTER TIPS:

- ◈ Make sure to give your syllabus and blue rolls to your division secretary.
- ◈ If you plan to be off campus this summer, update your out-going message on your voice mail.
- ◈ If you will not be checking GroupWise, be sure to leave a message indicating you will be away for a given period of time.
- ◈ Have a safe and happy Summer! See you in the Fall…

ECAMPUS GRADE BOOK IN EXCEL FORMAT:

We were fortunate here in the TLC to have Mary Lou present a workshop on downloading your eCampus grade book and putting it in Excel format. There are some specifics that all online instructors should know to make sure their spreadsheet is done correctly. Once you are logged in to eCampus and ready to download your grades, do so then save them to your desktop. They will then be able to be opened in Excel. Please remember the following:

- ◈ Do a separate spreadsheet for *each* section in Excel
- ◈ Always include a grading scale on the spreadsheet (may choose to display it via a footer)
- ◈ Make sure your Excel document is set to "landscape"
- ◈ Format the cells so all text is visible (center & expand cells as necessary)
- ◈ The necessary columns are the students first and last name, student ID, & grades
- ◈ The Header (custom header) should include: (left) name of course, (center) college, (right) date, semester, & section number
- ◈ Save the file as the course title, section number, & semester
- ◈ Any 9000 sections should be placed on a separate spreadsheet
- ◈ Always include each students' final grade on the spreadsheet (including all "W" grades)
- ◈ Please choose to show gridlines, it makes it easier to read once it's printed

Now you're ready to give your spreadsheet to Mary Lou. She keeps track of your "blue rolls" and will make sure the final grades are entered and submitted to LeCroy. If you have any questions, feel free to drop by the TLC or contact Mary Lou directly at ext. 8050.

HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!