

## EMPLOYMENT PROPOSAL AND EXPERIMENTAL COURSE IDEAS

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*From Radio to Skype: Intro to distance learning  
and/or*

*Any Time, Any Place: Intro to designing distance learning/training*

### Proposal Objectives:

Why am I proposing these ideas?

- 1) To expose a need which has been in existence for the last 10 years;
- 2) To aid VWC in becoming more competitive and more compatible to students' needs regarding digital integration and flexibility in course format; and
- 3) To promote the consideration of myself for much-needed immediate employment in an area in which I have the expertise from educational training and some work experience, and for an organization in which I could trust and support as an alumna, veteran distance learner, and potential employee with distance education skills.

### **Step 1. Does the proposed course idea already exist elsewhere?**

No, not in terms of distance education and mobile teaching and learning.

### **VWC COURSES RELATED TO INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN & DISTANCE EDUCATION**

(2012-2013 catalogue)

#### **MBE**

##### **324 Human Resource Management (4) W**

A study of the human resource process including such issues as recruiting, selection, training, performance appraisal, and compensation. Learning activities include experiential [sic] and group exercises, discussions, readings on HRM framework and application to cases, analytical issue papers, and oral reports. Prerequisites: ENG 105 with a grade of C or higher and MBE 301, or consent. Offered fall of odd numbered years.

#### **ISP**

##### **101 Fundamentals of Information Systems (4)**

Introduces students to the fundamental principles and practices of utilizing information systems to help organizations achieve their goals and carry out their missions. While the course serves as the introductory course in the Information Systems Program curriculum, it is a suitable elective for any student interested in the subject. Students should have a working knowledge of Internet use and computer applications such as word processing, spreadsheets, presentation graphics, and e-mail. Offered each semester.

##### **105 Information Systems and Computer Applications (4)**

Students explore current topics in the field of computer science/information systems beyond the introductory level covered in CS 100, including computer networks, Internet use, and ethical and legal issues related to the use of information technology. Students learn to use the more advanced features of software applications such as word processing, spreadsheet, database, and presentation programs. Offered intermittently.

#### **CS**

##### **100 Computer Concepts and Applications (4)**

Topics include basic concepts of computer hardware and software; the development of the computer, networks, and the Internet; programming with Alice; Web page development with HTML; application software including word processing, spreadsheet, database, and

presentation software; and social concerns associated with the widespread use of computers.

Offered each semester.

### **331 Systems Analysis and Design (4)**

Introduces the concepts, principles, and stages of computer-based information systems analysis and design. Topics include the system development environment, project management, system requirements definition, interface and structure design, and system implementation and administration. Prerequisite: CS 212 or consent. Offered on demand.

#### **LINKS CAN ALSO BE MADE WITH OTHER ACADEMIC DIVISIONS AND VWC DEPARTMENTS :**

- Other divisions to consult could include COMM and EDUC and INST.
- Other departments to consult could include Instructional Technology, Computer Services, and College Communications.

#### **Step 2. What is the current need for the proposed course or program?**

The current need can be extrapolated from personal experience as a 10-year alumna, and spouse of a current student.

#### **PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH BLACKBOARD AND VWC DISTANCE EDUCATION INITIATIVES:**

- Blackboard was introduced, but under-utilized by most of my former professors. Only one professor had made a successful use of it in the course; however, this successful use of Blackboard did not qualify the course as a true hybrid course by today's industry definition.
- No hybrid or online-only courses or programs were offered in the course catalogue. Most professors of courses utilized Blackboard as a course materials repository. It seems as if professors may still be taking this approach.
- There were no student tutorials on using Blackboard. If the specific professor didn't present this information, the student was left on his or her own to discover it. It is unknown which tutorials may be currently offered on demand by students and faculty now. It seems only face to face software training is available through the Instructional Technology department.
- There was, and is, not a specific distance education department. Blackboard is administrated by the instructional technology department which oversees f2f software training. This department does not seem to collaborate with any educators or supervisory academic deans in the design or use of Blackboard for specific teaching and learning needs. For example, previous course material is accessible in current course rooms, navigation is cluttered or redundant, pdf links are not labeled as such, visitors to the school web site can access Blackboard-only links, and there is an absence of regard for the needs of disabled students who must access items from the website as it is currently designed (alternative input and output devices may not be compatible with certain navigational treatments).

#### **WHAT MAY VWC NEED TO FILL THESE GAPS?**

VWC needs an online education department or program with specific staff to oversee a new online department administratively, technologically, and pedagogically,

- for instructional design and the training of faculty and staff specifically for online and hybrid course designs,
- for course troubleshooting for both faculty and students, and

- for Blackboard-specific maintenance from year to year (archive and re-use of course shells (templates at the section level), updates, restrictions of all the Blackboard “bells and whistles” to only what is needed for student learning, and the design of better course shells per educator and/or academic department need).

VWC needs online-only and hybrid courses – with the design of course shells (templates at the section level) to be consistent with a school-wide branding and style guide, and with the restriction of Blackboard-specific links to student and faculty portals (not open to public view or potential hacking of confidential and copyrighted information).

VWC needs a collaborative team of technology specialists, education specialists, media and graphics specialists, and instructional design specialists to steer the use and growth of the Blackboard CMS/LMS towards a healthy, functioning online education department that is student- and teacher-friendly and pedagogically-driven, and which is led by a specific distance education academic dean to supervise this team with vision and purpose for a new global, digital presence.

The use of technology for educational use needs to be driven by sound pedagogy and student needs, as well as, knowledgeable technology staff. *Blackboard is not just software to learn; it is the distance education classroom interface.* However, the demands of an online education presence would be too great a burden to expect a computer help or school technology department to manage in addition to maintaining overall security and maintenance of school-wide computer and software infrastructures. It really should be a separate department or program with a dedicated faculty and staff. Let us help the classroom faculty by also providing them with well-designed and pedagogically-driven course shell designs (templates at the section level), allowing each professor to drop-in their course content from semester to semester, thus allowing them to focus on the essentials of teaching and learning. Let us also help students of all abilities to maintain course participation options with a greater degree of flexibility and increased accessibility and usability.

**Step 3. What are possible beginning solutions to some of these needs? There are THREE:**

**(a) I can consult VWC regarding distance learner needs and experiences, as well as online program development and administration. (b) I can assist in the VWC transition to online education offerings as a distance education staff member. (c) I can teach a couple of new VWC courses of my own design based on several courses I have myself taken as a master’s and doctoral student.** Here are two proposed experimental course ideas (sketches) – or they can be combined into a single one if information is deleted that is also repeated in other courses (see Step 1). These courses would be unique in that they could model distance education techniques if they are classroom based, using grading rubrics & discussion “threads”, with adherence to copyright law restrictions when using multimedia, or they could be entirely online. In both cases, the courses would be developed *a priori* (in advance) in their entirety, with a syllabus presenting content outlines, grading rubrics, additional resources, discussion thread questions, and papers and projects. Additionally, information from these courses could

aid in faculty training aimed at engaging students in online learning through the development of more truly hybrid and online-only class experiences.

### **FROM RADIO TO SKYPE: INTRO TO DISTANCE LEARNING (100-200 level; W)**

#### **Course Description:**

Introduces students to the fundamental principles and practices of distance education. This course is a suitable elective for any student interested in the subject. Students should have a working knowledge of Internet use and computer applications such as word processing, spreadsheets, presentation graphics, social media, and e-mail.

**Pre-requisites:** none. Offered experimentally, or more often if students demand its return.

#### **SYLLABUS SAMPLE:**

##### **Welcome: (teacher letter of encouragement, with contact information)**

**Expectations and Requirements:** There will be 1 classroom “threaded” discussion per class meeting – students prepare their initial input in advance (100 words minimum) and “post replies” to each other during the class meeting discussions (or online) – 2 replies minimum, a Midterm essay and Final research paper. All grading will be done by rubrics for attendance (discussion participation), midterm essay, and final paper. The use of writing resources and plagiarism detectors will be required before final submission of all papers and projects.

Adjustments and modifications in schedules and deadlines can be made on an individualized basis per school policies and procedures.

##### **Course Outline: (all units for a topical overview)**

##### **Course Objectives: (all weekly units)**

##### **Grading and Rubrics:**

###### **Course Participation**

###### **Midterm Paper or Project:**

###### **Final Paper or Project:**

##### **Course Materials and Resources: (books, articles, URLs)**

##### **Weekly Units: (all weekly units)**

###### **Discussion Threads: (all)**

##### **Some of the Proposed Questions and Topics Under Consideration:**

- It is not as new as you may think!: Brief history of distance learning and technologies
  - From military to everybody
  - From “radio to Skype”
- Why do we need it?: Rationale for distance learning
  - Any time (schedule flexibility)
  - Any place (rural v. urban)
  - Reduced economy
  - Reduced personnel
  - Home-bound or mobile students (home school, disabled, temporarily hospitalized, student careers, military families)
- Where is it now and who is using it?: Distance learning in the various sectors today
  - Corporate – train adults (business, military, compliance industries)
  - K12- educate kids (SOLs, AP & gifted, remedial, credit recovery)
  - “just-in-time” needs (publishing texts or developing f2f courses takes too long)

- How do we use it?: Distance learning media & technologies today
  - CMS/LMS
  - Mobile devices
  - Social media & other apps
  - Virtual schools & programs

**A demo of this course, with fuller syllabus and file downloads, is online at:**

**<https://demo-courseroom.wikispaces.com>**

**username:** [REDACTED]

**password:** [REDACTED]

*[Downloads are on the Syllabus and About the Instructor pages.]*

### **ANY TIME, ANY PLACE: INTRO TO DESIGNING DISTANCE LEARNING/TRAINING (300-400)**

#### **Course Description:**

Introduces students to the fundamental principles and practices of instructional design for distance education. This course is a suitable elective for any student interested in the subject. Students should have a working knowledge of Internet use and computer applications such as word processing, spreadsheets, presentation graphics, social media, and e-mail.

**Pre-requisites:** none. Offered experimentally, or more often if students demand its return.

#### **SYLLABUS SAMPLE:**

##### **Welcome: (teacher letter of encouragement, with contact information)**

**Course Expectations and Requirements:** There will be 1 classroom “threaded” discussion per class meeting – students prepare their initial input in advance (100 words minimum) and “post replies” to each other during the class meeting discussions (or online) – 2 replies minimum, a Midterm essay and Final Project. All grading will be done by rubrics for attendance (discussion participation), midterm essay, and final project. The use of writing resources and plagiarism detectors will be required before final submission of all papers and projects. Adjustments and modifications in schedules and deadlines can be made on an individualized basis per school policies and procedures.

##### **Course Outline: (all units for a topical overview)**

##### **Course Objectives: (all weekly units)**

##### **Grading and Rubrics:**

###### **Course Participation**

###### **Midterm Paper or Project:**

###### **Final Paper or Project:**

##### **Course Materials and Resources: (books, articles, URLs)**

##### **Weekly Units: (all weekly units)**

###### **Discussion Threads: (all)**

##### **Some of the Proposed Questions and Topics Under Consideration:**

- Design it! - Instructional Design models v. book design
  - ADDIE (generic adult model)
  - UbD (K12 backwards design from the learner’s perspective)
  - UDL (usability and accessibility)

- Track it! - Project management tools
  - Gantt charts (progress tracking)
  - Budgets (resource tracking)
  - Project charters (development tracking)
- Interact with it! - Intro to interface design for e-learning – towards final PROJECT
  - What is HCI (Human Computer Interface) design?
  - Levels of interaction (student-student, student-teacher, student-content, student-interface, etc.)
  - What is engagement, interactivity, dynamic v. static design?
  - Prototyping (using Powerpoint, wikis, etc.)
- Teach and learn through it! - e-learning intro
  - Devices (mobile, desktop, laptop, streaming media, wireless Internet, etc.) – m- , e-, & online learning
  - Usability and accessibility (ADA compliance)
  - Purpose (knowledge or performance) – or can it be a “job aid” instead? And what about knowledge bases? Does it have to be a game or a simulation?
  - Software/apps (social media, multimedia, CMS/LMS, etc.) – when do we need these?

**[Update: Unfortunately, four years later, this short proposal never received a response from anyone at VWC. The wikispaces version was never viewed so the guest password was disabled. VWC also now has a limited online course presence as of the year 2017.]**