



UpClose

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Laura Grant/College of Extended Learning
Susan Pinkerton conducts a presentation on using asynchronous online discussion.

First Friday Series begins

Ann Bock's nutrition students can listen to her lectures in their cars, at the laundromat, or as they exercise. Her students can download her lectures to MP3 players and listen as often as they need.

Susan Pinkerton's students have animated, thoughtful discussions in her class. Few are passive learners, and she finds her students willing to answer and ask questions.

These were the topics on October 7 at the first in a series of talks sponsored by the College of Extended Learning, Teaching Academy, and LT Usergroup. These First Friday events will focus on techniques and tools of distance education.

Dr. Bock discussed ways to add audio to distance classes. Centra allows conferencing among many people, and students can download a Centra event for review. Using Microsoft Producer, a program available from the Microsoft website, she demonstrated adding audio to PowerPoint presentations. Dr. Bock also discussed Podcasting, which allows students to download audio of her lectures.

Synchronous versus asynchronous discussions was the topic of Ms. Pinkerton's presentation. Online discussions are time consuming for instructors, but she suggested letting students lead discussions to lessen the workload. Ms. Pinkerton warned teachers considering asynchronous discussion in class to limit the time they are available and to model behavior expected of students.

For more information on upcoming First Friday Events, visit http://distance.nmsu.edu/faculty/speaker_series.html. Materials from past events can be accessed at http://distance.nmsu.edu/faculty/speaker_series.html#past_events

Educational innovation through partnerships

Around the University and across the state, the College of Extended Learning has formed partnerships to bring innovation to education. Although these partnerships provide diverse populations with varied services, they all promote education and all seek innovative solutions to educational issues.

NMSU's School of Hotel, Restaurant, and Tourism Management is the only program of its kind in the state, and serving all New Mexicans interested in earning a degree in HRTM is a problem. Through SAVOR, a partnership with the College of Extended Learning, Drs. Priscilla Bloomquist and Carmen Gonzales were granted funds from the USDA's Hispanic Serving Institutes Program to develop a degree completion program and to pilot it with Northern New Mexico College (NNMC) in Espanola (see article, page 2).

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- 18 Making grading fast and fair
- 21 Supplemental instruction: what is it? Does it work? How can it be implemented?

December

- 1 Teaching adults: A practical guide for educators
- 1 Encouraging faculty to collaborate across disciplines
- 12 Team-based learning

January

- 12 Structured problem-solving to promote student creativity

February

- 8 Our students can too write Peer coaching for classroom & distance educators
- 14 or 15 Opening workshops
- 21 or 22 Microteaching session

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First Fridays

Each session is scheduled from 3:00 to 5:30 p.m. in Milton Hall.

Problem-Based Learning in the On-line Classroom

Kristi Blackburn

Using Distance Education Technology: What Matters to Faculty

Jeff Bader & Eduardo Arellano

Friday, November 4
Milton Hall, Room 81

Designing Assignments in WebCT

Lynn Kelly

Some Methods to Improve Student Interaction in Distance Education

John Mullen

Friday, January 20
Milton Hall, Room 81

In the right place at the right time: Delivering library resources and services to enhance student learning

Norice Lee

Friday, February 3
Milton Hall, Room 185

Technology groups

The LT Usergroup will meet November 11 at 1:30 in Milton Hall room 81 to explore the effective use of learning technologies in higher education. The meetings are open to anyone. Contact Tim Barnett-Queen [trbqueen@nmsu.edu] for more information.

The Faculty Senate Technology Committee will meet November 18 at noon (location TBA). Contact Kristin T. Cordova [krlunsfo@nmsu.edu] for more information.

Distance education tools enhance learning



Laura Grant/College of Extended Learning
Dr. Chris Dede discusses using simulated environments as learning tools.

Harvard's Graduate School of Education Professor Chris Dede led one hundred participants through a presentation and workshop about distributed-learning communities at the Teaching Academy on Friday, September 30.

Dede discussed the benefits of taking a distributed learning approach to educating across space, time, and media, unrestricted by traditional, face-to-face classrooms. His classes at Harvard benefit from distance learning tools.

Increased interactivity with electronic media does not necessarily mean decreased reflection. Dede said educators can use distance education tools to lead students who may not do well in conventional settings toward reflection. Distance tools like discussion boards promote reflection and allow quiet students to be heard in a way they might not be in a classroom discussion. Reflective students benefit from becoming increasingly comfortable with technology as a means to learn, he said.

Less reflective students can also become more reflective using these tools. According to Dede, it is important to "start where people are and take them where they aren't."

In the presentation, "NeoMillennial Learning Styles: From Websites to Distributed-Learning Communities," Dede said the evolution in education is a response to

- a shift in the knowledge and skills valued by society,
- the development of new methods of teaching and learning, and
- changes in the characteristics of learners.

These factors are constantly being reshaped by emerging technologies.

Dr. Dede's visit was the result of a joint effort by the College of Extended Learning, the Teaching Academy, and the LT Users Group and served as a kick-off to the First Friday Speaker Series. Materials from past events can be accessed at http://distance.nmsu.edu/faculty/speaker_series.html#past_events.

SAVOR the opportunities

In August 2005, the College of Extended Learning, the School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Management, and Northern New Mexico College (NNMC) began work to expand access to courses in food services and related fields through Student Access via Online Resources — an online extended learning initiative.

Over three years, SAVOR will convert 17 HRTM courses to online delivery. In addition, SAVOR will recruit and mentor a cohort of students with associate degrees in business from NNMC to pilot this degree in Fall 2006.

Dr. Priscilla Bloomquist, Associate Professor of HRTM, said that it is difficult for students across New Mexico to attend the campus-based program because of work, families, and other issues. Tourism is New Mexico's second largest private sector industry, generating over \$4 billion in 2002. NMSU's HRTM faculty anticipates a strong need to provide access to classes online and additional support structures to ensure a larger array of HRTM professionals, Dr. Bloomquist said.

Although SAVOR will recruit students from NNMC, it is an engaging, stimulating online learning opportunity that can meet the needs of students anywhere, anytime.

Partnerships....

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Another partnership establishes a virtual community for computer science in New Mexico. Dr. Clint Jeffery, Department of Computer Science, is working with NNMC and Crownpoint Technical Institute on a project funded by the National Science Foundation to promote computer science education through regular visits and distance education offerings from NMSU.



Norman Martin/College of Agriculture and Home Economics
By the Fall of 2006, 17 HRTM courses will be available online as a result of Student Access via Online Resources.

The oldest partnership in the College of Extended Learning is the Regional Educational Technology Assistance program (RETA). Created through the US Department of Education's Technology Innovation Challenge Grant, RETA provides professional development to New Mexico's K-12 teachers. RETA's professional development workshops and curriculum effectively integrate technology into the classroom. RETA also offers a test-preparation course for American Indian teaching candidates to help them prepare for the New Mexico Teaching Assessment exams.

The College is also home to the Creative Media Institute for Film & Digital Arts (CMI). CMI grew out of Governor Richardson's support for New Mexico's growing film industry. Degree programs will provide students with a liberal arts background that enables them to pursue further education, professional training, or a job in the digital arts industry. Acting for film and screenwriting courses will be offered Spring 2006 by CMI Artistic Director Mark Medoff.

A partnership with the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation meets the educational needs of people affected by this year's hurricanes. Over 130 universities nationwide are offering online distance education classes to students and others displaced by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. NMSU's mini-courses attracted 23 of these students, including several members of the baseball team from the University of New Orleans (see article, page 4).

The College will provide distributed learning expertise on a partnership with the University of New Mexico (UNM) for a project with the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA). This project will take instructional material and transfer it to a distributed learning format.

Recently, another partnership has addressed freshmen retention issues. The First Year Scholars Program is a two-semester comprehensive learning experience designed for incoming students who are interested in full-time study leading to a baccalaureate degree. Through increased interaction with other students, faculty, and NMSU services, NMSU hopes to help more students successfully navigate their freshman year. This program was created by the Provost's Office, the College of Extended Learning, Student Services, and The Center for Learning Assistance.

Profile

Steve Jeffries One-stop shopping for DE training

In September, Steve Jeffries joined the College of Extended Learning, where he will help with professional development for distance education faculty.



NMSU faculty with experience in WebCT might already know Steve. He was a certified WebCT trainer with ICT Training Services. He also has extensive knowledge of education. Steve is a licensed K-12 teacher, and his graduate work is in learning technologies and higher education administration.

Steve's office is in the computer lab in Room 81 of Milton Hall, and he maintains an open door policy. Anybody wanting help in the tools and pedagogy of distance education can stop in for consulting.

Steve believes that, "Faculty skilled at classroom teaching sometimes hesitate to take on distance education because they are unsure how to transfer their skills to a virtual classroom. But distance education can provide a rewarding teaching and learning experience if the instructor is well grounded in the technology and theory of teaching online."

Contact Steve at jeffries@nmsu.edu or at 646-2651.

ICT Training Services Calendar

November
9 WebCT Quiz Tool
17 Respondus

December
6 & 8 WebCT in The Afternoon
9 WebCT Open Lab

News and Events

For national and international events, visit the *DE Clearinghouse Conference Database* [www.uwex.edu/disted/conference.html]

For recent distance education headlines, visit *Daily News* at *Distance-Educator.com* [www.distance-educator.dcom/dnews/]

For news for university faculty members and administrators, visit the *Chronicle on Higher Education* site [www.chronicle.com]

For recent campus technology headlines visit *Syllabus* [www.syllabus.com]

About UpClose

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We welcome your ideas, comments, and suggestions for UpClose. To submit a story idea, please contact us no later than the 15th of January for publication in the next issue.

CEL offers courses for students displaced by hurricanes

After Hurricanes Katrina and Rita displaced thousands of students from the Gulf Coast, 130 universities nationwide stepped in to offer online courses through a program sponsored by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. Sloan Semester provides educational opportunities to students displaced by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and for members of the National Guard assigned to the Gulf Coast region.

NMSU's administrators and faculty were quick to support Sloan Semester. As a result, the College of Extended Learning enrolled 23 displaced students in 10-week mini-courses that will help students keep progressing toward degrees.

Mark Williams, a student from the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg, relocated to New Jersey. Mr. Williams is taking 12 credits through Sloan Semester, allowing him to maintain his status as a full-time student.

Both Mark Williams and Dominique Harris, a biology junior from Xavier University in New Orleans, are taking distance courses for the first time. Ms. Harris' six credits will count as elective credits for her degree.

Despite the trials both have experienced this semester, Mr. Williams and Ms. Harris are positive about their future. Ms. Harris said the hurricane taught her not to put limitations on what she does. Mr. Williams misses his home in the south, but says, "I'm a patient man, and I have a sense of humor." He does not plan to return to the south. "Life goes on," Mr. Williams said.



The Vice Provost's Corner

The College of Extended Learning is all about networks, both electronic and human, and this issue of UpClose features some of the partnerships that make up the human side of networks.

Some of our partnerships have been around for a while, like the Regional Educational Technology Assistance program (RETA), and others, like Sloan Semester, were put together quickly to respond in a timely manner to a recent, urgent need. Regardless of the origin of these partnerships, they all were created because somebody had an idea about how to improve education, and the College of Extended Learning was able to help that idea come to fruition.

Partnerships require a great deal of collaboration to succeed and the partnerships featured in this UpClose would not be possible without the institutional support of the NMSU administration and faculty. This support was especially important in putting together NMSU's contribution to Sloan Semester. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita devastated the lives of so many, and it was important for universities around the nation to step in and help where they could. Our NMSU community did its part, and students scattered by a storm but thinking of their future were able to benefit.

Dr. Carmen L. Gonzales
Vice Provost for Distance Education
Dean of the College of Extended Learning